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Narcissus
AND
Other Poems.

Walter Malony

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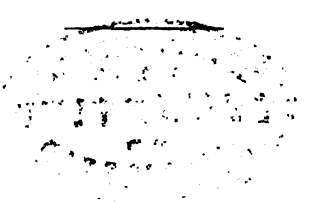
NARCISSUS

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WALTER MALONE.



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NARCISSUS AND OTHER POEMS.

NARGISSUS.

I.

THE Morning flamed above the Doric hills
In all the joyous glory of her youth,
As though her roses would be red forever,
And deck the wide earth with unfading bloom.
Her sparkling eyes dimmed all the night's wan stars,
Her red cheeks tinged the clouds with crimson fire,
While silvery arrows from her worlds of light
Dispersed the grim shades from the verdant woods.
The lithe stag started from his grassy couch
And shook the dew-drops from his branching horns,
The falcon spread his light wings to the winds
And darted upward like a sharpened spear;
The herdsman led his oxen to the brook,
Whose wavelets wondered at the great round eyes;
Then merry laughter from the roguish fauns
Resounded keenly through the leafy dells;
But louder than them all, some piping sprite
Made liquid music with the warbling birds.
But soon Narcissus left his flowery couch,
Narcissus, ever young and beautiful!
And there amid resplendent beams of morn,
Amid the odorous blossoms soft and sweet,
And wildly graceful spirits of the woods,

Narcissus shone the wonder of them all.
No red deer's skin, no tawny lion's hide,
No woven fabric round his shoulders hung,
For young Narcissus roamed in beauty nude;
His soft round limbs, fair as a lily's buds,
Were never hidden in a useless garb.

The flush of boyhood still adorned his face,
A childish beauty budding into youth;
He scampered nimbly like a half-grown god,
With shrill songs varying to a deepening bass.
Sweet little dimples flitted round his mouth,
His curving arms were lovely as a babe's,
His little feet like wondrous tinted shells,
With tiny peeping toes like purest pearls.
His roguish eyes bent downward timidly,
As though ashamed to see his nakedness;
His golden ringlets hung upon his breast,
Too short to hide his sweet enchanting charms.

The nymphs beheld him in his boyish grace,
Enraptured by his rounded, naked limbs,
Drinking his beauty like some wondrous wine,
That makes the blood burst into flowers of flame,
Their bosoms madly throbbing, eyes afire,
Breath wildly panting in an eager love,
So that they longed to clasp him in their arms
Forever in delirious blissful swoons.
And often all day would they follow him,
Untiring, through the distant woods and fields;
They'd stroll beside him, call him by pet names,

Clasp his soft cheeks and stroke his curly hair.
Oft would they leap upon him from the ferns,
And kiss his sweet lips o'er and o'er again,
Or madly beg him for one word of love,
Or one embrace to give them in return.
The pretty boy, half angered, like a child,
Would pout, then laugh, half relishing their love.

But often, wearied of their close pursuit,
He longed to wander lone and unharassed;
In vain, for everywhere the roguish spies
Would watch his path and haunt his flying feet.
Through meadows, fields, and forests deep and dark,
Still grottoes, lonely dells, high mountain-tops,
By winding rivers, lily-covered lakes,
He hunted vainly for sweet solitude.

Among the nymphs who thus would follow him,
Poor Echo vexed him more than all the rest;
And while his cunning thwarted other eyes,
This maiden always wandered at his side.
Full oft when gathering violets in the dells,
And thinking him unseen, he'd quickly start
To feel a burning kiss upon his lips,
And see her lithe form swiftly vanishing;
Full oft, beneath some hoary oak's green boughs,
His tired head resting on a bank of moss,
While sleep was weaving meshes round his eyes,
Would hear wild words of deep despairing love,
Sad, soulful sighs, with fond reproaches breathed,
And waking, there behold two great dark eyes

Bent o'er him, and a passion-heaving breast
His pillow, that had first been mossy earth.

Again, while wandering through the caverned hills,
Amid the shades would Echo glide along,
Clasp his soft hands within her fingers wan,
The hot tears trickling down her wasted cheeks,
And sob and murmur of his cruelty.

A curse had long been laid on Echo's head
By jealous Here, heartless in her hate.
For Echo often had assisted Zeus
In hiding amorous sins from Here's eye,
Till being seized at last, confessed her guilt,
And felt the fury of the queen of heaven.
Perfidious Zeus refused the nymph to shield;
So she was banished from the gods' abode,
To wander lonely o'er the waste of Earth,
Where rove swift-fated mortals to the grave,
And Autumn blights the glory of the year;
To pine amid the solemn wilderness,
And long for high Olympus, lost forever.

And Echo was not fair or beautiful,
But plainest, darkest of the woodland nymphs;
Her form had faded to a flitting shade,
Her voice had pined into a mournful cry.
Her eyes were large, dark as a cavern's gloom,
Her tresses like the dusky clouds of night;
Her face was like a spectre, and her sighs
Like bitter moaning of the winter winds.

Each word that reached her would her tongue
repeat,
For so the high gods cursed her for her sins.
She loved the shades, the dreary solitudes,
The lonely grottoes and steep mountain-sides;
So while she haunted close Narcissus' path,
She dared not show her visage openly,
But stole behind him ever stealthily,
And vanished when he turned to speak reproach,
Or, when he sat, would hide in thickets near,
And gaze upon him from the sullen shades.

Sometimes Narcissus, out of cruel spite,
Would wound her heart with stinging jealousy
When smiling on some other rival nymph,
Who madly kissed or fondly folded him.
Her dark eyes glittered with a blasting woe
To see him laughing on a swelling breast,
Some nymph with round arms close embracing him
And drinking in his lovely boyish charms.
But oft Narcissus scorned the charms of all,
And on this morning shunned each maiden's face.

II.

The first who met him as he tripped along
Was one who hunted there with Artemis,
A stately maid with waving, ebon hair,
With cheeks as crimson as the poppy's bloom,
With dark and wondrous splendor-streaming eyes,
And queenly brow of softest olive hue;

She seemed like dusky twilight, gemmed with stars
And sprinkled by the bleeding heart of day.
Her pure white feet with golden sandals decked
Were stainless and as soft as Eros' wings;
Her green cloak waving in the morning wind
Betrayed a rounded bosom like a swan.
Upon her back a bow and quiver hung,
Within her hand a sharp and shining spear.

"Is this Narcissus?" said she, with a smile;
"I've seen thee in these hills but once before;
Yet one so beautiful no eye forgets,
And so my memory cannot be at fault.
But hark, my pretty boy, a face like thine
Will often carry with it deep despair:
The nymphs whose love is scorned are plotting now
To have revenge upon thee. This I know.
For on Olympus only yester-eve
I saw a throng of these with Nemesis,
The stern-browed spirit, feared of gods and men,
Whose only joy is marring lives like thine.
I heard them murmur at thy cruelty,
Then beg dark Nemesis to curse thee, boy,
And she, I think, assented. Watch them well,
For much I fear some evil day will come."

"Was Echo there? 'Tis like her spiteful way;
I always hated her, and always shall."
"Thou wrong'st her, foolish boy; she was not there;
She long ago was driven from on high.
I cannot tell thee more, for hark, oh, hark!

The deep-mouthed hounds are baying through the
woods,
In hot pursuit of some affrighted stag.
Ye gods! My heart leaps in exulting joy,
And all my veins are tingling for the chase.
Farewell, I follow swiftly to the hunt."

"What thanks, fair goddess, shall I offer thee?—
But yet, alas! I have no gift of worth."

"A gift, thou foolish boy? Give me a kiss;
For kisses from a young man's amorous mouth
Will buy from woman more than gems and gold.
Another kiss! Another! Clasp again!
Just one more kiss, Narcissus, then I go!
My mistress would reproach me for this act,
But for its joy I'd bear her frown forever.
Beware, O youth. Echo thou needst not fear;
She loves thee as the banished god loves heaven,
But would not harm thee to regain her throne."

Narcissus stood stunned with a curdling fear.
The smile died on his quivering, ashen lips,
His heart stood still, his youthful blood grew cold.
"Why should they wish to harm me?" muttered
he;
"Am I not free to turn away from them?
Shall I be blamed because I love them not?
Shall I be blamed because they pine for me?"

Soon turned he on his heels, and musing went
Along the brook, then sat beneath an elm.

He paused awhile, then, growing restless, turned
And lay upon his back, while his fair locks
Were pillowed on a bank of feathery ferns.
But then the sun, arising high in heaven,
Sent through the parted boughs a tiny beam
That fell upon his eyes and made him wince,
So that he leaped up, restless and annoyed.
Soon sitting down again, he dipt his feet
Within the crystal waters just below,—
Those beauteous feet, more soft and sweet and white
Than all the spotless water-lilies there.
The wavelets kissed their blue veins delicate,
And fondled them, and babbled petting sounds,
While silvery minnows, growing bold at last,
Began to nibble at the tiny toes,
Which tingled till they blushed like rose-buds pink,
When he, to rout the minnows, shook his foot,
Splashing the water into foaming spray,
And sent them scampering up the brook in fright,
To peep back at him through the water-cress,
And wonder at his roguish, ringing laugh.

He gazed upon his image in the brook,
And marvelled at his own enchanting charms;
His cheeks like ruby wines, blue eyes, bright hair,
The rounded, flower-like beauty of his form.
He blushed to see his utter nakedness
And that which mortals seek to hide from sight,
But felt a boyish pride and secret joy
To feel and see his manhood drawing near.

He knew no maiden could resist his beauty,
And in his heart exulted at the thought.
"I'll scorn them all," he said unto himself,
"And drive them mad to get one stingy smile.
I'll rule them, chained before me by their love,
And they shall long in vain to kiss my feet."

Then turning round, he saw Leona there,
With jealous passion burning in her eyes;
For much she craved the sweetness of his charms,
But hated him because his heart was cold.

"Leona!" faltered he; "art spying still?
I am aweary of thy hateful eyes."

"Narcissus!" cried she, quickly, "I am mad,—
Mad with fierce love and flaming jealousy.
Beware! Beware! lest thou shouldst force my soul
To bring destruction on thy helpless head."

"Leona, I defy thy silly threats.
I am the son of water-god and nymph:
Free I was born, and free will ever be.
I am immortal; what have I to fear?
For Jove himself can never take my life,
And thou art but a weak and wandering sprite."

"I know, Narcissus, thou couldst never die,
But, selfish creature, I may curse thee still;
I may call down such anguish and despair

That life itself would be an agony.
Be mine, Narcissus! hearken to my prayer!
Be mine, or I will curse thee and myself!"

"Begone! Begone!" he cried, impatiently,
And turned his eyes in anger from her face,
Looking toward the woods beyond the brook.
A deadly silence seemed to shroud the place,
And all the forest huddled close with fear.
He turned around; Leona's face had fled,
But oh, the spectre there before his eyes!
For just a pace beyond him stood a shape
Whose awful presence curdled all his blood.
It was a woman with a sweeping robe
That shrouded her in ghastly spectral folds.
In her right hand she held a scorpion whip,
And in her left a leafy branch of ash.
Her face was livid, pale, and pinched and wan,
With burning eyes beneath her haggard brows,
Like fiery coals in gray volcanic cones.
He could not move, as though his limbs were stone,
His brow was damp with cold and clammy dews.
She gazed upon him sternly; then she said,
"Thyself shalt bring a curse upon thyself.
He who loves not another loves himself,
And he shall crave in vain to ease his soul;
True love drinks life-blood from another heart,
But selfish love doth gnaw upon his own.
Farewell! thy choice is made, and thou shalt find
In loving self thou graspest at a shade."

III.

She glided from him like a ghost of night,
And glimmered dimly through the branching boughs
Till lost to sight amid the forest gloom.

Narcissus shivered, for the breeze had chilled,
And trembling birds for fear had ceased to sing.
The nymphs, aroused, had fled before her face.
The startled, shuddering trees with horror moaned,
Like huddled cattle, when, on tainted air,
With horns erect, eyes starting, mad with fear,
And lowing, groaning deep and piteously,
From altar stones they smell their comrade's blood.

Again he turned and gazed into the brook,
And saw himself reflected in its waves.
Again he saw his sweet lips, glowing cheeks,
His azure eyes, his rippling golden hair,
His rounded, dimpled arms, his dainty feet,
And all the naked wonders of his form.
Then what a world of wistful agony
Came o'er his soul while gazing in the brook!
Oh, how he loved that shadow of himself!
Oh, how he longed to clasp it in his arms!
Oh, how he longed to kiss its rich red lips!
What eager yearning swayed his bounding heart!
What flaming passion fired his leaping blood!
Such deep desire, such maddening thrills of love,—
A heaven of bliss, but just beyond his reach!
His pulses throbbing wildly to his head,

O'ercame him like a fierce, voluptuous dream.
He sought to kiss his own lips in despair,
His own breast struggled vainly to embrace.
And then the deep eyes of the shadow there
Seemed begging him to share their languorous sweets.
Its lips seemed longing to be pressed to his,
Its arms inviting to their swoonful realm.

Filled with his pain, he could resist no more,
But leaped to clasp the shadow to his heart.
In vain, in vain! A splash, a chilly thrill,
And then the shadow fled before his eyes!
He struggled with the icy, mantling waves,
Clung to the bushy bank and climbed to shore,
But cold and shivering with the trickling drops.
Again he looked upon the cruel brook
That now had cursed him with his own fair face,
And once again he saw the shadow sweet
Gaze fondly at him from the mirror there.

No lover ever longed to clasp his love
With half such fervor as Narcissus did.
But yet, alas! that passion could be fed
On rounded beauties of the loved one's breast,
And lulled to sleep by blissful blandishments.
All others who have loved, with amorous play,
Have felt at last their passion satisfied,
Have drunk the bubbling cup of Cupid's joy,
And cooled the raging fever of desire.
But his love was a fire with naught to quench,
A sleepless craving that had naught to lull;

He hungered for a fruit he could not taste,
He thirsted for a cup he could not quaff.

The lover who hath not his love returned
Hath yet the sympathy of every heart,
Hath others, placed like him, to share his grief,
And feels ennobled by his sad, sweet pain.
The guilty lovers, scorned by all the world,
Still find a happier world within themselves.
But oh, the horror of unnatural love,
Beyond the sympathy of every soul!
With no one sharing in that agony,
His own cheeks seared with tears of baffled shame!

And then, again, he felt such agony
He leaped once more amid the brook's cold waves.
Ah, still in vain! A splash, a chilly thrill,
And once again the shape eluded him!
Then deep despair fell o'er him like a shroud,
And like a child, lost in the night, he sobbed.
The twilight, like a priestess, crowned with stars,
Draped Day's fair ringlets in the veil of night,
Stabbed his white bosom, lit his funeral pyre,
And with her victim died in crimson flames.
The swallow glided to his eave to sleep;
The wild dove fluttered to her peaceful nest;
The shepherd drove his thirsty flocks to drink,
Then led them, bleating, to their nightly fold;
The new moon, like a harvest sickle, shone
Through golden grains and flowers in fields of heaven;

The gentle shadows gathered in the woods,
And laid kind hands on Nature's dreaming soul;
But still Narcissus lay beside the brook,
Longing to perish with the hapless day,
Whose curse had pierced him with an agony
Unsoothed and cureless by the balms of night.

IV.

The weary days lagged on like crippled churls,
And sweet Narcissus withered in despair.
His blue eyes faded with their sleepless cares,
Like desert skies with parching fervor wan;
His crimson lips were mutely quivering
Like flaming dead leaves in the autumn winds;
His dimpled cheeks were pinched, and blanched and thin,
Like great white roses fading day by day;
His graceful step came to a weary halt
Like stiffened lameness of the wounded doe.
Hour after hour he gazed upon the brook,
And the big tears dropped in its azure waves.
But still he lived while ever loathing life,
And begging heaven to be allowed to die.
He gazed in anguish at the ghostly face
Which in despair looked up from depths below,
With great eyes mournful, outstretched bony hands
That beckoned to him like an aspen's leaves.

One day while lying on a bank of moss
He heard a rustle,—Echo's stealthy step.
"Narcissus!" said she sweetly in his ear;

He turned toward her, bursting into tears.
No longer did he seek to flee her face,
But longed to mingle bitter tears with hers.
"Narcissus," said she, "I shall share thy grief,
My woful heart shall ever throb with thine.
Long have I watched thee, feared to come to thee,
But thou, I know, wilt never drive me hence.
Thy hopeless love consumes thine own sad heart,
And mine upon another's cast away;
Our souls are bound together by a bond
Of mutual, never-changing misery."
He wept, then laid his head upon her breast,
And soon with weeping lulled himself to sleep.

What bounding, leaping throbs of wild delight,
What dreamy, balmy, soothing spells of bliss,
Filled all her soul while clasping him to heart!
She softly smoothed his thin, dishevelled locks,
And tenderly she stroked his pallid cheeks.
She would have given the treasures of the sea
For one soft pressure 'gainst that dreaming face,
And all the gold of all the tribes of earth
For one strong clasping of those tender arms,
And all the glories of the starry skies
For one warm kiss from that enchanting mouth,—
But she dared not for fear of waking him!
Ah, hapless hearts, that beat together now,
Yet parted by a universe of tears!
Ah, hapless souls, each craving for the same,
And each forever doomed to pine in vain!

Ah, would that Fate had bound them both together
Like bride and bridegroom on their nuptial night!

Soon through the woods was heard the bay of hounds,
And then the huntress nymph of Artemis
Came tripping down the pathway to the brook,
The hounds still yelping as she moved along.
Her naked breasts were heaving joyously
Like water-lilies on the rocking waves,
While silvery laughter fluttered on her lips.
Her right arm bore the skin of spotted pard
Torn warm and bleeding from the victim's back.
She oped her lips to cry out in delight,
And tell poor Echo of the morning's sport;
But Echo beckoned her to tread tiptoe,
And speak in whispers that he might not wake.

"Is this Narcissus?" asked the huntress maid:
"Oh, what a fearful, wasting change is here!
Once I beheld him like a milk-white fawn,
But stricken now and lying down to die;
Once I beheld him like a lotus flower,
The peerless swelling blossom wonderful,
Then budding in unearthly loveliness,
Now lying withered in the sultry dust;
Once I beheld him like the round, full moon,
In naked beauty rising on the night,
With mellow, golden glory in his orb,
O'er lovers true in odorous gardens sweet,
But now, as gaunt and haggard as its wane,
When hanging shattered blanched and thin and wan,

Above the bare boughs of a blasted wood,
He sinks to perish in the Western wilds."

Poor Echo could not answer for her tears.
The huntress gazed in silence at the hounds
Laving their gray flanks in the crystal stream,
Lapping sweet waters with their jagged jaws,
And shaking dew-drops from their hanging ears.

Then said the huntress, starting, "I forgot,
In speaking of Narcissus' deep despair,
To tell thee that which surely brings thee joy.
Thou dost remember that, on yester-eve,
Down through the Western scarlet skies of flame
A spotless swan came fluttering to thy feet,
A cruel arrow rankling in his breast.
Then thou, with kind hands, didst remove the dart,
So that the swan arose and soared away.
Know thou that swan belonged to Artemis,
And she is grateful to thee, hapless nymph.
She bids me tell thee beg one boon of her,
Speak the one wish that liest next thy heart,
And thou shalt see at once thy dream come true."

Echo at first by this was so amazed
She scarce made answer to the kindly nymph,
But overjoyed, at last shed floods of tears,
Gave heartfelt thanks, and cried out in delight,
"Oh, I shall now to heavenly scenes return.
Long have I wandered through these earthly wilds,
And yearned again to see my happy home.

How often when chill autumn filled the skies
With dead leaves flying from the haggard trees,
How often when the winter winds on high
Bore flocks of cranes towards the Southern seas,
How often when the mortals passed me by
In funeral trains, with some enshrouded form,
How often, in those days, I craved for thee,
Olympus blest, free from decay and death!
I long to see thy banquet-halls again,
And take the ruby wine from Hebe's hands,
I long to see dear Iris smile once more,
And spend sweet converse on the days gone by,
To gaze on youthful Eros' face, and drink
Immortal glory from his wondrous eyes!"

But Fate would hearken not to Echo's prayer,
And gathered other woes to wound her soul,
For then Narcissus murmured in his dreams,
"Oh, would that I could die! but I cannot;
The gods can ne'er immortal life destroy.
Oh, would that heaven, in pity on my grief,
Might change me to some painless, dreamless flower!"

Echo seemed stricken with a deadly wound,
And then grew still and rigid as a stone.
A moment like a long age slowly passed,
And then she said, "Will kindly Artemis
Grant more than one wish unto hapless me?
May I return to heaven and save him too?"

"Alas!" the nymph cried; "it can never be;
For jealous Here hates thee, stricken maid.

My mistress scarce could gain consent from Zeus,
Who hath betrayed thee to his furious queen,
To let thee have the granting of one wish,
And much great Here murmured when 'twas known
That this one favor was bestowed on thee.
Thou mayest choose to help Narcissus there,
But if thou dost, Olympus shalt not see.
The curse upon Narcissus cannot die
As long as life remains within his breast,
And as he is immortal, he must change
His present shape, and live another life.
He must be buried as the mortals are,
And from his grave a flower will soon ascend
To take the life of him now in your arms.
But that would be a special boon of heaven,
And the great gods would do no more for thee."

"Oh, no!" cried Echo, "do not change his form!
How can I bear to see my darling love
Changed to the lifeless beauty of a plant?
Oh, spare him, spare him! pity, pity me!
'Twill bury me forever in despair!"

"But," said the other, "if he changes not,
His soul must writhe in never-dying pain."

"Ah!" Echo cried, "shall I be doomed forever
On cheerless Earth to roam in banishment,
And ne'er again behold Olympus blest?
Or must I, hapless maiden, doom my love
To sink forever in the dismal grave?

What countless ages shall I wander here,
To see earth wither in the myriad years,
Behold her cities ruined, desolate,
And generations pass away and die!
To think that I must tread those endless years,
Amid these deserts of decay and death,
Without my love, the idol of my soul,
And live, still live, alone, alone, alone!"

"Still," said the huntress, "he must either change
Or live a life of deathless agony."

"I love him," said poor Echo, shedding tears,—
"Let it be so: his good shall be my prayer!
I choose not to return to heaven with thee,
But beg thy mistress to relieve *his* woes!"
The huntress glided from her through the woods,
But heard behind the piteous sound of sobs;
Turned, and beheld sad Echo clasp her love
As some fond mother hugs her dying child,
Speak words of burning love within his ears,
Then kiss his sleeping face a thousand times;
And as the nymph towards Olympus soared,
She heard, blurred by the distance, dreary moans,
Till misty clouds obscured her view of earth,
And rushing winds stilled all its dreamy hum.

V.

Once more the morning, like a gorgeous rose,
Bursts into blossom in a field of fire;

Once more her white steeds, shaking silvery manes,
Leap forth, caparisoned in blue and gold;
Once more her handmaids wreathe the clouds with
flowers,
From crystal goblets sprinkle ruby wines;
Once more the pale moon in their veils of light
Is shrouded like a dead bride for the tomb;
Once more her sweet kiss thrills the dewy stars,
Till all those orbs celestial faint with love,
Then melt their glories on her milk-white breasts,
And perish in the splendor of her hair.

But as the light fell on Narcissus' brow
Its rosy flame tinged livid hues of death.
The dryads swung amid the leafy boughs,
The water-nymphs arose above the waves,
The sylphs flew round like jewelled butterflies,
And zephyrs hummed like golden-wingéd bees.
But Echo heeded not those beauteous forms,
And saw naught save her loved one dying there.

His head lay pillowed on her tender breast
Beneath the shadow of a hoary oak,
His breath was coming slower, slower still,
His eyes were ever growing dim and dark.
He had been told how Artemis had given
This one boon to her lonely, aching heart.
Oft had he thanked her for remembering him,
But never thought what sacrifice she made.
Alas! how often doth unselfish love
See all its tears unnoticed or forgot!

"One boon I beg," sobbed Echo, timidly;
"Wilt thou kiss me, my love, before thou diest?"
He put his thin white arms around her neck,
And faintly smiled upon her pallid face;
He held his fevered, quivering lips to hers,
And fell back fainting in her trembling arms;
Then, sinking slowly, bowed his golden head,
And with one lingering, piteous moan, he died.

A curdling cry pierced through the startled air,
And woful Echo clasped a leaden corpse.

The pensive Evening trod the Western hills,
Her saffron mantle glowing in the skies
Like yellow foliage of the autumn woods.
Through silent dells and lonely mountain groves
Her dusky shades, like mourners, crept along.
Then all the shepherds of the neighboring vales,
And all the lovely mortal maidens there,
Came gathering round to look into his face,
Soon to be hid beneath the chilly clods.
And maiden hands brought many a beauteous flower
To scatter o'er his sad, untimely grave,
White, azure, pink, and purple hyacinths,
With valley-lilies, frail and delicate,
And crocus-blossoms, pansies rich and dark,
Soft buttercups and creamy daffodils,
The modest white and purple violets,
New-opened daisies, with their hearts of gold,
Sweet cowslips, and primroses gemmed with dew.

But he was lovelier than those beauteous flowers,
And sweeter than their faint and odorous breath.
His soft white eyelids, closed for evermore,
Now hid the azure of his dreaming eyes;
His pallid cheeks lay slumbering calm and still;
The sweet young dimples slept around his mouth;
His soft white hands were folded on his heart,
Like two sweet doves dead in one little nest;
Pure water-lilies wreathed his golden hair,
And rich musk-roses bloomed above his breast.

They buried him in damp and cheerless earth,
To be the prey of death's corrupting hand,
And every clod that fell upon him there
Dropped like a mountain on poor Echo's heart.

Months passed away, and then a pallid plant
Arose and blossomed on his lonely grave;
His soul had passed within that tender flower,
And even now it bears Narcissus' name.

Then Echo glided from the sight of men,
And wandered through the trackless wilderness,
O'er lonely valleys, mountains high and still,
Forever weeping, calling out his name.
She pined away, grew pale and paler still,
Then flitted like the shadow of a curse,
Until at last her voice alone was left
To answer madly every vagrant sound.
Great nations perish, but she cannot die;
Vast empires crumble, but she lingers still.
The gray gods in Olympus' lofty halls

From jewelled goblets quaff their nectar still;
She, unforgiven, never can return,
Her name forgotten by them long ago.
And so she wanders ever, suffering still
Undying anguish and undying love.
1887.

ORPHEUS AND THE SIRENS.

THE summer day waned o'er the peaceful sea,
Whose vast expanse stretched shoreless far and near;
The pale blue sky, flecked by no wandering clouds,
Shone softly with the mellow glow of eve;
Its depths extended like eternity,
And seemed to mingle with the boundless waves.
All day the weary mariners had gazed
To gain a prospect of some land, whose coves
Might be a haven for their sea-worn ship;
But still above and all around was naught
Save dreamy skies that hung o'er slumbering seas.
The evening slowly waned, the sun sank low
Above the waste of waters in the west;
And then behold! between them and the sun
A dark rock rose from out the briny waste;
Like to a towering cloud of night it seemed,
Where blent the sapphire sky and emerald sea.
Then Mopsus spoke, gray-haired Thessalian seer:
"Beware, beware! it is the Sirens' isle!"
So Jason cried, "Turn, turn the vessel's course!

Death waits us there; our life depends on flight.
Toil with your might, my oarsmen, for our hopes
Must now rely upon your sinewy arms."
The oarsmen strained their limbs with giant strength,
Their dark eyes glittered with a desperate hope,
Their brows were lined with meshes of dark frowns,
Their thews were twisted like an adder's coils.
But all for naught! some hapless fate had drawn
Their ship within the current gliding swift
Towards the jagged rock of certain death.
But Orpheus spoke, the golden-throated king,
Whose tones were sweeter than harmonious spheres:
"Since might hath failed, my music now shall win.
Oft have the warbling birds at dawn of day
Ceased all their notes to listen to my strains;
Oft have the woodland dryads stilled their songs,
Abashed before the sweetness of my lyre;
Apollo hearkens to the melody,
And merry Hermes pauses in his flight;
The growling leopard spares his trembling prey,
The bright-eyed eagle frees the fluttering dove;
Moved by those liquid notes, the hard rocks nod,
And leafy trees dance when the winds are still."

Lo! on the summit of the vaulting rock,
See where the Siren braids her golden hair!
See how the zephyrs wave the shining strands,
And clothe her bosom in a radiant maze!
Now see her soft arms clasp the magic lyre,
The spotless neck bend o'er its silver strings,

Till, like the treasure of the swan's full nest,
'Tis pressed upon her rounded, heaving breast.
And now the sun doth kiss the sky good-night,
Until her cheeks blush into rosy flame.
The brown crags flush amid the ruddy glow,
The Siren's fair form blooms with ruby tints,
As white-winged clouds at coming of the dawn
Are wreathed with roses plucked from heavenly bowers.

High on that rock the beauteous sisters stood,
Their lily fingers twined in tender clasp,
Their rounded shoulders touching, while their breasts
Heaved 'gainst each other in a sweet embrace;
Their soft bare feet gleamed like narcissus flowers.
The gazing sailors shuddered when they saw
Pale, grinning skeletons strewn at those feet.
But soon their red lips budded forth in song,
As sweet young blossoms open in perfume;
So all the wide sea was entranced, and all
The sleeping waves awoke and laughed for joy.
The regal sun, enchanted in his course,
Stood still above the mighty world of waves,
And filled the darkest depths with ruddy light;
The sunburnt sailor's face was lit with joy,
And each dim eye flashed into starry flame.
Then from the Sirens' lips came melting tones,
Like honey-dew that drops from opening flowers:

AGLAIOPHEME.

"Come, bravest of heroes! with passion I yearn
To clasp you and fold you in blissful embrace,
To greet you with songs on your happy return,
And cover with kisses each weary, worn face.
Long, long have I waited and watched for your sails,
Still yearning and pining and breathing sweet sighs;
Desert the dark ocean, its rocks and its gales,
And drink in the glory of love-lighted eyes."

THLEXIEPEA.

"Oh, come to me, lovers! repose on this heart!
And swoon on Love's pillow and quaff of his wine!
Come, waver no longer! ye shall not depart,
My arms shall forever around you entwine;
My bosom is fairer than blossoming bowers,
And warmer and softer than nightingale's nest;
My kisses are sweeter than honey-gemmed flowers,
More witching than nectar the thrill of my breast."

The liquid harmony filled all the air,
As mellow sunlight fills the summer sky;
The waves were babbling to the murmuring winds,
As lisping infants to their mothers' songs.
But all the mariners were mad with love,
And drunk with brightness of the Sirens' eyes;
They laughed and murmured with a maniac joy,
And sought to leap into the sea below,
So that they might at last find rest from toil,
And steep their senses in the wine of love.

But Orpheus stood unmoved, as if he scorned
To be enslaved by passion's fierce desire.
He sang and played, and lo! the sea-waves rose,
And dashed in playful joy about his feet;
The gray-winged sea-birds perched upon the mast,
The bright-hued dolphin waved his glittering tail,
The purple sea-weed rocked from side to side,
The blue-eyed naiads rose from coral bowers,
Their round cheeks gleaming through the emerald surge,
The black sea-snake uncurled his monstrous coils,
Made tame and harmless by his wondrous harp.
Oh, would that words had life, and verses souls,
To give a feeble image of his song!

ORPHEUS.

"Brave heroes! shall our honor dim with rust?
Shall all our well-won laurels droop and fade?
Shall virtue's white star fall into the dust?
Shall we retire to ignominious shade?
Fame's clarion voice calls to us in our shame,
And sings of grander diadems to win;
What warrior here forgets his glorious name,
And gives an ear to words of gilded sin?

"Awake! arise! death poisons all the air;
Behold the ghastly skulls that strew yon shore!
New triumphs we should win, new dangers dare,
And wondrous isles and trackless seas explore.
Think of the golden fleece our arms have won!
Think of the mighty giants we have slain!

Away! our wondrous deeds are not yet done!
Elysium's bowers shall be our final gain!"

AGLAIOPHEME.

"O heroes, with passion my dreams are afire,
Enwreathing my fancies with flowers of flame;
My pulses are throbbing like strands of a lyre,
And leaping with raptures no mortal can name.
Earth's maidens can never reward with such bliss;
No frown of stern Pallas shall fetter my charms;
The mother who hushes her babe with a kiss
Feels not the devotion which thrilleth mine arms."

THLEXIEPEA.

"Ye grasp at a shadow when seeking renown,
And perish in battle enshrouded in blood;
But raptures and blisses with Love shall flit down,
And laughter and music his magic hath wooed.
O heroes, here endeth the tale of your toils;
O wound not my spirit by turning away!
In pulses of passion forget your turmoils,
And gather the roses while still it is May."

ORPHEUS.

"My comrades brave, list not unto their lays,
The voice of death from lips of poisonous lust!
The paths of duty are the brightest ways,—
Lift, lift your souls, thus grovelling in the dust!

Our loved ones wait at home and watch in vain,
  Their bright eyes tearful in their lonely gloom;
Let us return and soothe their tender pain,
  Kissing their soft cheeks into brighter bloom.

"They wait beside the barren, restless seas,
  Their soft eyes dimmed with watching for our sail;
Shall we so heartless and perfidious be,
  As to forget their faces grown so pale?
How many eyes will sparkle when we come!
  How many hearts will bound with waking bliss!
Let us return unto our long-lost home,
  For only there hath earth its paradise."

His sweet tones died upon the raptured waves,
Which moaned and sighed to lose their balmy sounds,
And with the sun that faded out of sight
They left the lone sea desolate and still;
The dull blank silence that was left behind
Fell on the soul like stillness of the grave.
The songs had ceased, but Orpheus' harp had won!
That dreary night would be the Sirens' last!
The strong breeze rose, and swelled the broad, white sails;
The hapless Sirens, weeping piteously,
Gazed, wan and drooping, at the fleeting ship,
And bowed their heads beneath the shade of death.
Their golden hair fell drooping on their breasts,
Their rounded arms grew cold, their red cheeks paled;

Then rose their death-song, moaning deep and low,
Like some child's sob, so woful, tremulous,
Or, like the wail of chill November winds
Above the grave of summer's withered flowers,
And dying, dying, sinking, sinking low,
The Sirens' hearts were stilled, their eyes were dimmed;
The shades of night fell on the woful scene,
Their death-song fading in the gathering gloom.
1886.

ETERNAL LOVE.

"For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."—ST. MARK xii. 25.

LOVE, they tell me mournful stories of the life beyond the tomb,
Whether spent in bowers of Eden or in lower worlds of gloom;
Thou art wise, dear love, my master, though the mortals call thee blind,
And I grope in tears and darkness; thou must now the pathway find.

Love, they tell me as I'm sinking in the gate-way of the grave
Nevermore thy smiles so tender nor thy kisses I shall crave,

Nevermore shall long to see thee, never long thy
step to hear,
Though a thousand ages waiting, counting lingering
year by year.

Love, they tell me in the caverns of the Charnel's
realms of gloom
Never blush the sweet carnations nor the soft warm
roses bloom;
And that solemn spirits treading in those mournful
midnight bowers
Only see the chill camelias and the ghostly white
moon-flowers.

Love, they tell me all are strangers on those dreary,
dreary strands,
And each passes each in silence, smiling not nor
grasping hands;
With those phantoms treading onward, passing still
each other by,
Ne'er a word of love is spoken, ne'er is heard a laugh
or sigh.

Love, they tell me high-born ladies and the knights
in armor there
Meeting in those dim recesses only gaze with chilly
stare;
And that lovers and their loved ones, once so tender,
warm, and true,
Never turn to look a moment, passing from each
other's view.

Love, they tell me when those spirits in the end
ascend to heaven,
Wisdom, beauty, treasures, glory, all the gifts but
love are given;
Though one spirit be in Eden, one in Hades' mad
despair,
This shall know the other's torment, yet will never
shed a tear.

Love, I tell thee as I'm dying what my answer, love,
shall be,
And my heart for both upwelling answers for thy-
self and me—
Nearer, nearer, true love, nearer! gather fast the
shades of night,
Kiss me, kiss me, dear love, kiss me! ere the fading
of the light.

Though I'm clothed in funeral garments, I will tear
the shrouds away,
Breaking through the dismal charnel, walled with
iron, stone, and clay,
Then with fingers torn and bleeding, pallid face, and
bruiséd feet,
I shall wake thee in the midnight, stealing kisses
warm and sweet.

Love, I tell thee, should they give me Paradise with
all its bliss,
And I heard thee calling to me from the dark and
dread abyss,

I would beg the demon porter to return thee to the light;
If he would not, I would join thee in thine anguish and thy night.

"JESUS WEPT."

My Master bides not at the rich man's palace on this day,
Where mirthful music, wine, and feasting speed the hours away;
His weary, way-worn feet have brought him to this lowly door,
And there the Prince of Heaven sits weeping with the friendless poor.

O blesséd Lord, friend of the friendless, happy should they be,
Their burning grief and anguish sharing side by side with thee!
For in this doubting age we can but moan and beg thy grace,
But cannot see thy loving tears nor know thy gentle face.

Though in that rich man's palace swells the sound of revelry,
To-morrow in that palace shall the wail of anguish be;

Though in this poor man's hovel stalks the horrid
spectre Death,
Soon shall He vanish at the great King's life-inspiring
breath.

Oh, wondrous sight, a Monarch sitting in that humble
cot!
Oh, wondrous sight, the Lord of angels with this
hapless lot!
Oh, wondrous sight, here treads the ruler of the suns
and stars!
Oh, wondrous sight, our God is weeping 'midst
Earth's prison bars!

I wonder if his moanings did not change to music
sweet,
I wonder if the blossoms did not spring to kiss his
feet,
I wonder if the watching angels gathered up those
tears
And made them starry clusters, shining through the
endless years.

For they were purer than the dews on lilies newly
blown,
And lovelier than an empress' jewelled diadem they
shone;
More radiant than the treasures that the sea's rich
caves adorn,
More glorious than the Oriental splendors of the
morn.

Those blesséd, blesséd tear-drops, falling on our dreary dearth,
Have wooed a golden harvest from the withered waste of earth,
Have melted, too, a myriad million selfish hearts of stone,
And blotted out uncounted sins in earth's vast records shown.

And though a thousand demons seek to give thy cause a thrust,
Those burning tears have worn their cruel daggers into rust!
And though a hundred empires 'gainst thee hurl their gathered powers,
Those holy tear-drops, like a flood, sweep down their haughty towers!

And though a host of bigots burning with a furious zeal
Have sought to aid their false creeds with the chain and stake and wheel,
Those tears have quenched their fires and broken all their iron bars,
Thy cause triumphant still o'er steel and torch and bloody wars.

Oh, blesséd tears, with rainbow colors yearning earth illume!
Oh, blesséd tears, with lotus flowers make blissful Heaven bloom!

Oh, blesséd tears, in mercy rain on all the spirits fell,
And like a mighty ocean quench the flaming gates
of Hell!

THE GRAVEYARD.

Once I feared thee, mournful Monarch, with thy sad
and solemn dells,
Haunted by the vesper shadows and the sobbing
funeral bells;

Haunted by the spectral roses, in their silken robes
of white,
And the mock-bird's mystic singing in the dim and
dusky night;

Haunted by the tombstones ghastly gleaming
through magnolia leaves,
And the restless moonlight figures where the grave-
mound dimly heaves.

But my loved ones gather with thee in the fading,
fleeting years,
And I lay within thy caverns all my joys and hopes
and fears.

Thou hast treasures in thy bosom richer than the
ocean's caves,
Where the lustrous pearls are beaming and the coral
forest waves,

Where the mermaid gathers amber filled with mellow
golden light,
And the silver-weighted galleons glimmer through
the emerald night;

Thou hast hearts of gold within thee, hearts all
priceless pearls above,
Rich with sweetness, rich with kindness, rich with
never-dying love;

Thou hast dreams and aspirations sleeping with thy
sheeted dead,
Wondrous visions, grand ambitions, from the earth
forever fled.

Thou hast beauties in thy bosom blooming under-
neath our feet,
Lovelier than our purple lilacs and our jasmines soft
and sweet;

Thou hast blue-eyed, dimpled children, with their
mazy, golden hair,
Thou hast maids with brows of beauty, manly fig-
ures sleeping there.

Thou hast wisdom in thy bosom greater than the
lore of earth,
Gathered by its gray-haired sages from the dim
creation's birth;

Thou hast infants in thy bosom, learned in secrets
whispered low,
Which our wise men seek forever, never find, and
cannot know.

A VANISHED SUMMER.

The dull December days, with garlands sere,
Bear slowly, sadly on the dying year;
The sombre hills, veiled in their mists of gray,
Like mourners in some haunted land away,
With haggard faces view the last sad hours
Of him whose spring-time wreathed their brows with
flowers;
The weird, wild winds wail forth a funeral hymn
Amid the bare boughs of the forests dim.

Soon will the chill storms scatter clouds of snow,
And stinging sleet and beating hailstones blow,
Like savage Cossack horsemen dashing by,
And fiercely clashing through the earth and sky;
While I, amid the desolation, yearn
For summer days that never can return,
Whose mellow skies and fragrant flowers have per-
ished,
And now alone within my heart are cherished.

O gentle love, those happy hours are dead!
Our blissful summer has forever fled!

Yet often doth my soul amid this rime
Crave and regret that long-lost happy time;
The frosty earth seems budding forth in flowers,
The liquid bird-songs fill the withered bowers,
The cold gray sky seems smiling down on me
When thinking of our summer by the sea.

How I remember now those golden days,
Robed in their dreamy, gleaming tropic haze!
Palmettos graceful and the dark-green pines,
The crimson roses and the trailing vines!
I see the green Savannah's leafy glooms,
Adorned by splendor of magnolia blooms,
The blushing oleanders, jasmines rare,
And mock-birds warbling in the ambient air!

How I remember now the broad, bright sea,
Soft as the sky, grand as eternity!
How oft we sported with its playful spray,
Or watched the ships that glimmered far away!
We saw the mornings rise from garden bowers,
With pearly grottoes and with jewelled towers,
The evenings, 'mid their ruby-clustered vines,
Exhaling clouds of misty mellow wines!

We saw the white moon from the darkness bloom,
A water-lily in a lake of gloom!
Then through the twilight watched the timid stars,
Led by the crimson-crested hero Mars!
And then we told our old, old tale of love,
Until our spirits soared to skies above,

And, guided by the splendor of thine eyes,
We trod with angels through that paradise.

Ah, summer garden, with the golden gate,
Thy blissful glories all are desolate!
Thy golden sunshine now is lost in gloom,
Thy wondrous blossoms now are in their tomb!
Ah, summer ocean, with the playful waves,
Thy tropic splendors slumber in their graves!
Thy sweetest face hath now forever vanished,
Thy sweetest hope is now forever banished!

1885.

THE ONE LOVE.

THERE is a flower I long to call mine own,
Most modest, frailest of the garden's blooms.
Within that bower the star-like lily looms,
The queenly rose reigns on her emerald throne,
The sweet carnation's breath is softly blown,
The gorgeous tulip flames through leafy glooms,
But love for that one flower my heart consumes;
My soul craves for her and for her alone.
The world hath other flowers of richer hue,
And other buds will bloom when these have fled;
But with that flower doth pine my bosom true,
And ne'er another love my soul shall wed;
My faded blossom cannot youth renew,
Nor life revive my one love that is dead.

"HE WHO HATH LOVED."

He who hath loved hath borne a vassal's chain,
And worn the royal purple of a king;
Hath shuddered 'neath the icy Winter's sting,
Then revelled in the golden Summer's reign;
He hath within the dust and ashes lain,
Then soared o'er mountains on an eagle's wing;
A hut hath slept in, worn with wandering,
And hath been lord of castle-towers in Spain.
He who hath loved hath starved in beggar's cell,
Then in Aladdin's jewelled chariot driven;
He hath with passion roamed a demon fell,
And had an angel's raiment to him given;
His restless soul hath burned with flames of hell,
And winged through ever-blooming fields of heaven.

UNSPOKEN LOVE.

I dare not in thine ears my secret tell,
And long in vain to say, "I love thee," sweet.
False love is like a swallow, shrill and fleet,
True love a mock-bird, under some strange spell,
Who sings alone where midnight shadows dwell;
One, like a vain rose, every face doth greet,
While one, which never mortal eye shall meet,
Doth blossom like the fadeless asphodel.
False love speaks loudly, like a fickle wave,
While, like the great deep 'neath the billow's roar,

True love doth hide its wondrous treasure-cave;
One, like this life, is changeful, soon is o'er;
While one, like death, clasps in his silent grave,
And keeps his secret, true for evermore.

"THOU LITTLE DREAMEST."

Thou little dreamest, as I gaze at thee,
What visions gather in mine eager eyes;
Yet all the glory of the summer skies
Would vanish if thy face I could not see;
A dreary desert, where thou wert, to me
A wondrous golden city would arise;
But all the earth, with myriad human ties,
A wilderness, without thy soul, would be.
For thee my heart shall, never ceasing, yearn
Until my locks with winter snows are gray;
For thee its flame shall ever constant burn
Until it flickers on my dying day;
To thee, my darling, it shall fondly turn
Until it crumbles in the dust away.

SONNET.

ON MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1887.

The restless years at last have reached this day,
When youth must leave me, never to return,
When Nature's kindly face grows cold and stern,
And life seems short, which once stretched far away.

No longer shall I rove 'neath skies of May;
  New toils and cares are mine, hard truths to learn,
  Which ever faster fall from sorrow's urn,
Since life no longer means a childish play.
O Voiceless Future! what fate dost thou hide?
  Hast thou a tale of darkness or of light?
Shall sin and sorrow snare my feet untried,
  And shall I stand or fall before their might?
But lose or win, or weal or woe betide,
  All is forgotten soon in endless night.

A BRIDAL BALLAD.

Earth, enwreathed in emerald verdure, smiles in
    every dell and dale,
  Heaven, aglow with azure splendor, bends with
    gentle gaze above,
Morn arises with the glory of a wondrous fairy-tale,
  Night itself is bright with beauty, when the heart
    is filled with love.

Spring is tuneful with the trilling of a million merry
    birds,
  Queenly Summer's radiant blossoms flame in every
    field and grove,
Autumn, crowned with richest fruitage, laughs
    among his vines and herds,
  Even gruff and surly Winter smiles to see the face
    of love.

Youth, aglow with joys unfading, wreathes his golden
locks with flowers,
Age's path is strewn with garlands which a loving
spirit wove,
Life reclines in regal beauty, singing under budding
bowers,
Even Death at last is conquered by the gentle hand
of love.

But the earth is gray and faded, heaven is draped in
sombre clouds,
Morn's bright eyes are dim and tearful, twilight's
shadows sadly rove,
All the year is dull and gloomy, all its joys are in
their shrouds,
Life is but a funeral journey to a heart bereft of
love.

What is wealth, so hard and selfish, with its heaps
of gems and gold?
What is fame, so false and fickle, at whose word the
masses move?
Wealth is but the icy grandeur of the Arctic moun-
tains cold,
Fame a fleeting desert phantom, when the soul has
banished love.

But to-day, two souls united, never more to stray
apart,
Have begun their journey onward, all their
plighted faith to prove;

Hope has robed the clouds with roses, joy is wreathing round each heart,
Every step is strewn with lilies from the fairy-land of love,

And the days shall never darken, nor the pathway lead astray,
While sweet Eros guides them onward like a gentle snow-white dove;
Youth shall flit in fadeless morning, all the months be merry May,
Hope shall never be deceitful while their hearts are true to love.

1888.

THE BYRON CENTENARY—1788–1888.

A HUNDRED summers since his first birthday
Have shone in splendor, then have pined and died;
Earth's fond old heart has throbbed with joyous pride
To greet them with their garlands green and gay,
And filled with anguish as they passed away.
But brightest Summer decked her kingdoms wide
When unto Byron's lyre her mounts replied—
He perished, and her fields were sere and gray.
Her sweetest flowers were springing when he came,
But fading as his footsteps turned to leave.
Among her sons is many a mighty name,
But none like him, the reckless, bright, and brave.
He died, like music in a glorious dream,
And Love's own heart was laid in Byron's grave.

A WEDDING SONG.

Two roses nestling in the same fair bower,
Two dew-drops in the bosom of a flower,
Two sweet birds singing songs of soft delight,
Two stars that meet in glittering fields of night,
Two roseate clouds that mingle far above,—
Such is the union of true hearts that love!

Fond hopes are beauteous in the morn of life,
But soon they perish in the harsh world's strife;
The sparkling wine-cup gilds the festal night,
But sears the soul with baleful blast and blight.
Our dearest pleasures soon shall cease to move—
Earth hath no fadeless joy save precious love.

With pearly treasures gathered from the sea,
Or starry gems from desert Araby,—
With golden heaps from India's wondrous caves,
Brought to their master by a thousand slaves,
The owner turns from that for which he strove
And feels but poor without some one to love.

As through chill mists around the traveller's way
The sunshine steals to warm the sombre day;
As through the Winter night's enshrouding gloom
Soft Spring returns in all her maiden bloom;
So heaven comes like some pure white-winged dove
To bless the humblest cot where bides true love.

May all your troubles be but April showers
To strew the way with rich and radiant flowers!
May angels hover with their outspread wings
To shield the nest where fond affection clings!
May sweet joys flit where'er your feet may rove,
And summer splendors wreathe the path of love!
1887.

THE FIRST TRANSGRESSION.

EVE, sweet tempter, lovely sinner, God hath cursed
the deed which thou hast done,
Paradise is lost forever, and the stricken world's
woes have begun.

Over Eden's eastern mountains flame the purple
glories of the morn,
Welcomed by the waking warblers and the dewy
blossoms newly born.

But I see the green leaves trembling, and I hear the
quivering breezes sigh,
Feeling that for thy transgression thou and I and
all the world must die.

Yet a spirit whispers to me that to save the world
'tis not too late,
If I turn my heart against thee, sin not, and desert
thee to thy fate.

Then the fleeting years would scatter pallid autumn
lilies on thy tomb,
I, thy consort, live forever, radiant with immortal
youthful bloom.

Then mayhap the great Creator would another
woman mould for me;
I would twine her locks with roses, give her kisses
that I once gave thee.

But I cannot, wondrous being! for thy smiles and
wistful, pleading tears
Still would follow, hunt and haunt me through the
maze of never-dying years.

Night's dim shades would find me ever lying by the
bride I could not save,
And the piping birds at morning still would find me
weeping at thy grave.

Earth would be a barren kingdom when, without
my queen, to rest I stole,
Life eternal, bitter anguish, if I lost the idol of my
soul.

Thou hast conquered, sweet enchantress! I forsake
the fields of Paradise
For thy bosom's realm of rapture and the blissful
glory of thine eyes.

It is done! I see the tiger, maddened, eyes ablaze,
come creeping hither!
It is done! The birds cease singing, and our glorious garden bowers wither!

So my sons shall ruin empires, cast away their honor,
treasures, fame,
Sink to Hell and turn from Heaven, when a woman
bids them share her shame.

GLADSTONE.

1886.

GATHERING snows of six-and-seventy winters whiten
on thy lofty brow,
Gathering glooms of six-and-seventy winters
hover round thy proud eye's fire,
And the mournful twilight hoary clouds thy life-
time's gentle sunset glow,
While thy hopes, once so triumphant, in the
shadow of the tomb expire.

But above that waste of systems, strewn with ruins
of the grand and great,
Streams thy banner, still resplendent, as the morning flames through dusky night,
Like a star thine eye still flashes, leading legions
that shall ne'er retreat,
And thy form is still unbending, battling in the
burnished mail of Right.

Thou that scornest empty titles where the heart
and soul are false and low,
Thou that rendest chains of tyrants, forged in
feudal dungeons of the past,
Soon thine arms shall be victorious, soon thy hand
shall deal a deadly blow,
And the strong oppressor's cohorts scatter as
before the autumn blast.

England's proudest kings are peasants placed beside
thy peerless, princely mien,
And their diadems are dimmer than the shadow
of thy sunlike fame;
Thy crown jewels are the tear-drops of the grateful
emerald ocean queen,
And her never-fading garlands shall forever deck
thy hallowed name.

Through the years shall live thy trophies, when thy
soul hath rent its mortal bars,
When Napoleon's arch of triumph in the gather-
ing dust of time shall lie,
With a splendor never waning, like the wondrous
never-dying stars,
When the old earth's proudest empires like a
morning mist have glimmered by.

RODERICK D. GAMBRELL.

(Poet and reformer, killed May 5, 1887, aged twenty-one years.)

How long shall crimson-handed murder hold his cruel sway?
How long shall God be silent in the mute skies far away?

How long shall heedless angels look with blind eyes on our world?
How long shall crime hold revel ere the thunder-bolts are hurled?

How long shall earth be flooded with her children's blood and tears?
How long unheard our pleading through the sighing, sobbing years?

And now the cruel spoiler comes to lay thy proud head low,
When youth is in its budding and its sweet May morning glow.

For though our life is kindled only by the Master's breath,
Each heartless, ruthless mortal still may blow the blast of death.

Ah, how the anxious watchers long to see thee at the gate!
Ah, how the sobbing mourners miss thee in the gloaming late!

But nevermore shall watchers see thy face so blithe
and bright,
And nevermore shall mourners hear thy footsteps
quick and light.

For noisome weeds may flourish, bearing loathsome
fruitage still,
While soon the flower fadeth in the cruel north wind
chill.

Thy boyish face was beaming like some gay and
gallant song,
While thou didst gird thine armor for the war with
shameless wrong.

I see thee still, young hero, planning bold and bril-
liant deeds,
Prepared to tread unflinching where the path of duty
leads;

So brave, warm-hearted, truthful, ever daring to be
right,
Thy white shield gleaming and thy good sword bur-
nished for the fight.

There reared thy dragon foeman, coiling in his mon-
strous might,—
And then the shriek of "murder!" hurtled in the
shuddering night.

But soon from out thine ashes shall a host of heroes start,
And soon a deadly dagger shall benumb the dragon's heart.

As out thy grave shall blossom all the splendor of the spring,
Thy soul shall wake above us, borne upon a swan-like wing.

DYNAMITE.

WELL may ye shudder at my name and curse my hour of birth,
Ye tyrants, hoarding misers, lords, and rulers of the earth!
For my hoarse voice will never soothe your ears with flattery,
But always bears unwelcome news unto the powers that be.

We cannot love each other's ways, born under differing stars,
Ye under regal Hesper's beams, I under smouldering Mars;
Ye came into the world bedecked in silks and gems and gold,
I came in rags and tatters, wild with hunger and with cold.

I woke in stony dungeon cell, barred from the cheerful light,
Was fostered in the dreary shades of misery's tenfold night,
For golden chains wore links of steel, for diamonds, tears of woe,
For rubies I had drops of blood brought by the tyrant's blow.

But I will heed no master's call, I never bend a knee,
Though despots seek to chain me down, I go forever free;
For in my sinews dwells the might of earthquake and of storm,
And jagged lightnings burst their bonds, hurled by my giant arm.

The massive feudal castles, knit with blocks of granite stone,
I heave on Titan shoulders till their turrets rock and groan;
The walls built in a hundred years fall as I lift my hand,
And palace towers by my breath are scattered like the sand.

And yet my mission bears a boon to weary humankind,
And welcome is my good right arm to free heroic mind;

I tear the bolts from cells of woe and want and slavery,
In freezing mines, to lone exiles, I whisper "Thou art free!"

Ye princes of the earth, your dungeons must restore their prey,
And bleak Siberia's dens shall feel the golden light of day.
Your gold can bribe me not, I fling your chains away to rust;
I sweep the earth with baleful blast,—remember ye are dust!

1886.

LEONORA.

(Read before the Alumni Association of the University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi, June, 1888.)

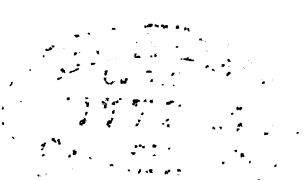
Up the streets of San Antonio rode the swarthy Mexic chief,
With his cruel glances gloating on the faces marked with grief.
What cared he for supplication, for the blood and tears they shed?
He had sworn to curb the Texans, though the streets were strewn with dead.

But a lithe form leaped before him, seized his startled
horse's rein,
While the wild steed leaped and struggled, waving
back his ebon mane;
But no rude hand held the bridle; 'twas a maiden's,
soft and small;
So he quickly lost his terror, letting low his proud
neck fall.

She was radiant, tall, and stately, with her glossy,
waving hair,
While her eyes, like stars at midnight, glittered with
a wild despair:
"Hateful tyrant, cruel murderer, give my lover back
to me!
See me, robber, I am kneeling in the very dust to
thee!"

"What, my beauty! do you curse me, then implore
me from the dust?
Sure, your thoughts are very fitful,—can you in my
mercy trust?—
But your lover, foolish woman, in an hour must
surely die—
Hush! come nearer! You shall save him ere this
moment passes by!

"Think once more before you answer; do not turn
your face away!
Be my bride, my Texan beauty, and he shall not die
to-day!—



Hush, the crowd is listening, dearest! whisper lowly
in mine ear;
You shall not delay me longer,—see the gallows
looming there!"

Then her proud head bent with anguish, then her
bright eyes dimmed with tears,
And the deep sobs shook her bosom, for her brave
heart sunk with fears;
"Murderer," then she faintly faltered, "you have
won; I yield at last!
Save his life and I will leave him; every other hope
has passed."

Then the great throng made a passage, as the doomed
man came that way,
Shrouded in his sable garments for this last unhappy
day;
But he looked with pride around him, smiling at the
scowls of hate,
Like a bridegroom crowned with roses, not the
victim marked by Fate.

"Halt!" the guard and prisoner halted; then the
general smiled and said,—
"He is pardoned—Guards, release him; I will spare
his worthless head."
Then the prisoner, joyous, wondering, saw his Le-
onora there;
But her hand was in another's, and his soul sank in
despair.

Night arose in matchless splendor, jewelled with a
thousand stars,
But to Leonora's lover all their rays were gleaming
tears;
In the old cathedral windows blazed the lamps with
ruddy glow,
For his darling Texan beauty soon would wed his
hated foe.

She was decked in bridal garments, draped in misty,
milk-white veils,
Like a snowy cloud of summer, or a barge with
silken sails;
In her dark hair bloomed a cactus, like the crimson
setting moon,
While her wreath of orange-blossoms gleamed with
radiance of the noon.

Standing in the old cathedral, by the swarthy Mex-
ican,
While he triumphed, she was blushing, then with
anguish growing wan:
"One request," she said, "you'll grant me; I must
now my good faith prove;
Yonder glares he like a tiger—I must see my hap-
less love."

Then she left the angry bridegroom, fell before her
lover's feet,
Clasped her hands in shame and sorrow, then upon
her bosom beat.

"Oh, my darling, lost forever, I must bid a last farewell;
How I love you, how I've struggled, words can never, never tell.

"Far across the Rio Grande, with a weary heart so sore,
I must seek the stranger's country, where I'll never see thee more;
I shall be the tyrant's plaything, I shall never more be free;
Say that you'll forgive me, darling, in your last words unto me!"

"Faithless, fickle, perjured woman! Would you stab my heart again?
Thus to leave a Texan soldier for a savage Mexican!
Why not rather let me perish by the gallows or the sword
Than to curse me for a lifetime by a treacherous, poisoned word?"

"Silence!" said she, whispering lowly, "I have horses at the gate;
We will mount them, I am crafty—quick! or all will be too late!
See the old cathedral rafters, see the smoke arise on high!
I have set the torch beneath them—quick, my love, for we must fly!"

And they fled, for at that moment terror seized the mighty throng,
As the fires, like gleaming serpents, writhed the shrinking roof along.
While the crowd was struggling madly, both the lovers reached the gate,
Then upon their Texan horses soon were flying down the street.

Wildly rushed the Mexic minions, loud their leader called in vain,
For the Texan steeds were swifter than a blast of winter rain:
Far across the green prairie, foaming, dashing, leaping on,
Leonora and her lover laughed to see the race was won.

Yes! both lovers liberated, flying over emerald plains,
Grassy meadows, sparkling fountains, woodlands, fields of ripening grains;
Now her dark hair streams in triumph, now her cheeks glow red like wine,
And her starry eyes are sparkling as she laughs and murmurs, "Thine."

SHELLEY—1792–1892.

He came amongst us, wand'ring from on high,
Like golden-haired Apollo, long ago,
To share with us our lives and labors low,
And gaze with longing on his native sky;
To sing sweet songs whose strains shall never die
For weary mortals on their paths of woe;
To cause a golden city's walls to grow
By magic of his heavenly harmony.
But now the singer hath forever flown,
And left us beating still our prison bars;
His spirit o'er the midnight's jewelled zone
Returned to reign with Mercury and Mars,
With Cassiopeia on her sparkling throne,
And dusk Orion crowned with radiant stars.

WILL HUBBARD KERNAN.

Thou art the poet of the realms of Night,
Of anguish, desolation, and despair.
Like stern-browed Orcus leaping from his lair,
While Enna's blossoms withered in their fright,
Thou treadest through the earth with blast and blight,
The sweet muse from her gardens glad to tear,
That she thy mournful kingdom's gloom may share,
A bride enrobed in funeral garb of white.
She roams our fields when Spring is rich and green,
And when the golden Summer crowns the years;

But when the Autumn's mournful face is seen,
And icy Winter's stormy brow uprears,
Returns to be Death's sad and solemn queen,
With thee, weird king of terrors and of tears.

A SONG OF TO-DAY.

In olden romance and in sweet old song
I've read of Love o'erleaping walls of stone,
Of Love so proud and passionate and strong
It burst all bonds that held it from its own.

Walls fell away like magic; keys of gold
Unlocked the heart of watchers, and the door
That guarded beauty from the tender fold
Of lover's arms oped wide in days of yore.

No matter through what feuds or civil strife
Of warring houses, Romeo could yet,
In daring carelessness of loveless life,
Kiss 'neath the vines his waiting Juliet.

Ah, how I long for those old days again,
When danger lent an added zest to love,—
When swords were all that held Love from the pain
And sweetness of the bliss that melted Jove!

How I should joy o'er guarded walls to creep,
Through lines of sentries seek Love's guided way,
To find my sweet, when all save lovers sleep,
And, with her, sigh Life's sweetest half away!

But there are sterner tyrants now than those
That battled Love in gracious days of old;
'Tis cruel Custom, careless of the woes
Of youthful hearts. 'Tis Caution, pulseless, cold.

'Tis chill Convention, who with falsest snare
And lie of Prudence binds the ardent girl,
Lifts the charmed chaplet from her perfumed hair,
From Life's sweet circlet tears the fairest pearl.

Ah, Eros, Aphrodite, give me grace,
And send sharp swords to guard fair maids again!
I should not then bear meekly my disgrace,
And live in banishment, all lonely, then!

"On Love's light wings would I o'erperch all walls,
And stony limits should not shut Love out;"
I'd pass the sentries in their spear-hung halls,
Or fight and die, or put the knaves to rout.

But now she 'tis that's hostile, and though Love
From me to her has sweetly sped his dart,
These foul false phantoms keep their watch above
The tender tremors of her timid heart.

Ah, dearest, let thine own sweet nature speak!
See'st not my heart, all prayerful, prostrate lies?
Be true to Love's fair colors on thy cheek,
And Love's dear ensign in thy perfect eyes!

Be thrall to shades no longer! Let the tone
Of Love's persuasion rule all words above;
Let my heart conquer, it will free thine own,
For none are free save who are slaves of Love!

HOWARD HAWTHORNE MCGEE.

HER ANSWER.

If thou dost love me, and I love thee too,
Wilt let them take thy sweetheart from thy side?
If I am for thee, who can be thy foe?
If I am willing, wilt thou be denied?

Ah, laggard love, I pine in lonely halls,
With hateful traitors thee and me between;
Wilt thou, my loyal subject, scale these walls,
And liberate thy hapless captive queen?

'Tis true no swords or spears surround my court,
And worldly craft is now the sentinel;
'Tis true I'm guarded, not by fleet and fort,
But Wealth and Avarice watch my prison cell.

Yet in that fortress thou hast friendly hands,
Two little rebels, who will steal its key,
With potions lull to sleep the sentry bands,
And then betray the castle unto thee.

Oh, fear no foe; naught can withstand thy powers
When thou dost love, and I thy love return;
To steal a kiss Love breaks through stony towers,
And Love to win Love laughs the world to scorn.

He loves not who hath not the heart to dare
The woman that he loves from foes to take;
She loves not who will not his portion share,
Though forced to give the whole world for his sake.

Wilt raise the siege, and bid thy hosts depart,
When I'd surrender if thou shouldst command?
When God hath given unto thee my heart,
Wilt let a mortal rob thee of my hand?

Then take the kiss I long to give to thee,
And spite the scheming, envious world outside;
I all in all to thee, and thou to me,
With Love our world, a kingdom rich and wide.

THE PRINCE'S WEDDING.

I AM standing here forsaken in my lonely attic room,
Hair dishevelled, lips contorted, fierce eyes glaring in the gloom.

In the streets I hear the shouting of the gay and giddy throng,
Mad with mirth and mad with music, sweeping like a flood along;

Streaming under silken banners, under leafy arches green,
Strewing roses in the pathway of the nation's future queen;

Here they come in festal raiment, eyes aglow and faces bright!
Mounted guards with gilded trappings, beauteous maids bedecked in white!

Here they come, the little children, in their holiday attire!
Here they come, the bands of music, setting every heart afire!

But my soul is filled with anguish, and I long in vain to die,
As my startled babe awakens with a painful, piteous cry.

Ah, my babe, my helpless outcast! now my shame, though once my joy,
Pierce me not with fiercer tortures; hush thee, hush thee, pretty boy!

Thou shouldst be a prince, my darling, robed in silken garments soft,
Not in lowly rags and tatters in this squalid attic loft;

I should be a queen, my darling, jewelled o'er with starry gems,
On a golden throne reclining, wreathed with sparkling diadems.

For the prince, boy, is thy father, thou and I should share his name,
But the traitor now hath spurned us, hurling us to burning shame.

Now the city shouts his praises on his merry wedding-day,
While the woman he hath ruined crouches trembling in his way!

Man may dye his brow with crimson, yet may wear a lily wreath,
And may hide his hateful treason like a dagger in its sheath;

Woman, having once worn scarlet, nevermore shall wear the white
Till the pallid shroud enfolds her in the charnel's cheerless night.

See the nuptial's grand procession, marching proudly in the sun,
Heedless of thy wailing mother with her shame and sin undone!

See the beauteous bride, my darling! She who stole thy father's love!
See her, robed in spotless garments, like a peerless, snow-white dove!

See my loved one there beside her! See his eyes with rapture fill!
O my prince, my lord, my master, how I love thee, love thee still!

How I crave one look of pity, how I crave one farewell sweet!
How I long to cry unto thee, how I long to kiss thy feet!

O my prince, my God, remember, thou didst once my love return,—
But thou wilt not hear or heed me as with maddened heart I yearn.

Hark, the wedding-bells are pealing! She is stealing him from *me!*
Curses on thee, happy maiden; how I envy, envy thee!

Hark, the wedding-bells ring faster! I am thrilled with madness dire!
Hark, the throbbing peals grow louder! Heart and soul are all afire!

I am furious, frantic, frenzied, as I clutch my dagger's hilt;
I am coming, coming, coming! Tremble, tremble in thy guilt!

Now I hurl my wailing infant in thy rearing horse's path!
Now my dagger in thy bosom quenches swift its flaming wrath!

It is done! My babe lies mangled 'neath the horse's
pawing feet!
It is done! Thou liest bleeding, dying in my arms,
my sweet!

* * * * * * *

Now I hear the hammers ringing as the gallows
rises there;
They have tied my hands behind me, they have
shorn my waving hair.

Now I see the noose adjusted, as they bring the
sable hood;
Now I see the rabble gather, as they clamor for my
blood.

But, my prince, I still have conquered, thou art mine
for evermore!
Thou canst not, my sweet, evade me, I shall leave
thee nevermore!

Though thy soul should soar to heaven, and should
pass the pearly gate,
And the angels should surround thee, in thy glory
and thy state,

I would knock upon those portals, like a ghost from
haunted lands,
And thy heart should quake with terror at those
beating, bony hands.

I would come with funeral garments as beneath the gallows drest,
I would show my murdered infant, bleeding on my pulseless breast,

Glazéd eyes from sockets starting, lips protruding, they should see,
And my neck with blue rings circled, where the hangman strangled me.

From thy kindly Saviour's bosom I thy shuddering soul should tear,
And my arms should clasp around thee, dragging thee to Hell's despair,

Through the wilds below to wander, lost to light and lost to hope,
Thou and I bound fast forever by the coiling hangman's rope.

Though the servile world hath crowned thee, thou at last shalt share my shame;
Though the worldly priests absolve thee, thou shalt share my couch of flame.

ELIZABETH AND ESSEX.

Forgive thee, writhing, gasping viper, doomed, despairing soul?
Forgive thee, heartless traitor, who from me my Essex stole?
I tell thee, dying woman, as the death-dews gather chill,
I loathe thy face—God may forgive thee, but I never will.

The weary, weary years that part me from my Essex' side
Have vanished, and I live again the hapless day he died;
The dead Past rises with its ghastly visage from the tomb,
As on that awful morning when my Essex met his doom.

I see the scaffold looming dimly on that dreary day,
To which my darling Essex soon must wend his cheerless way;
I see the headsman standing masked in black and draped in red,
With cruel steel axe gleaming, hungry for my Essex' head.

His locks which oft I fondled soon must roll into the dust,
His soft cheeks whiten 'neath the sharpened axe's pond'rous thrust,

The lips I kissed so often soon be bleeding, chill and stark,
His bright eyes, clear as starlight, soon be closed and dim and dark.

O Essex, Essex! I am waiting, longing to forgive!
O Essex, Essex! stifle struggling pride, consent to live!
O Essex, Essex! hearken, let not Death come in between!
O Essex, Essex! hear, oh, hear thy true love and thy queen!

Alas! he hears not, and he will not send me back the ring,
Whose golden circlet would have made the fettered captive king.
And now my heart is withered, life is choked with agony,
For Essex treads the scaffold, there to bow his head and die.

Since then the birds of Spring-time sing in vain to soothe my woe,
Since then the Summer blossoms lighten not my footsteps slow,
Since then the winds of Autumn taunt me with his dying wail,
Since then the snows of Winter haunt me with his visage pale.

A thousand blushing maidens in my realms stroll
forth to-day
To meet fond lovers who will woo them on their
happy way,
While I, their queen, becrowned, bejewelled, wildly
wring my hands,
For my true lover wandering in the cheerless spirit
lands!

Can I forgive thee, who didst hide from me the
fatal ring?
Can I forgive thee, traitor to my love, my lord, my
king?
No, I will curse thee as thou diest, like a demon
fell,
And when I follow I will hound thee through the
fields of hell.

Forgive thee, writhing, gasping viper, doomed, de-
spairing soul?
Forgive thee, heartless traitor, who from me my
Essex stole?
I tell thee, dying woman, as the death-dews gather
chill,
I loathe thy face—God may forgive thee, but I
never will.

MY QUEEN.

THERE is but one maid whom my soul doth love,
And she is sweeter than a budding flower.
She standeth in a haughty castle tower,
And sees me, burdened vassal, from above;
Through marble halls of wealth her footsteps move,
While want and famine round my rude hut lower;
She reigneth in a wondrous royal bower,
While I, an outcast, on the highway rove.
But often 'neath the mellow, mazy moon
I sing her love-songs till the morning light;
Oft steal we through the blooming fields of June,
And there, in secret, lovers' pledges plight;
She scorns me not; my heart-throbs thrill in tune
With Poesie, the one star of my night.

WHEN I GET RICH.

"WHEN I get rich, when I get rich," I whisper to my heart,
"O'er scattered roses thou shalt on thy march of triumph start,
Thy golden visions evermore shall fold their fickle wings,
And lead me, robed in purple, through the halls of queens and kings.

"As some wan, wasted flower, beneath the parching desert skies,
Hath fainted with the fervor till the rain-drops ope its eyes,

And as in tearful dreams one sees a sweet face long
denied,
And starts, awakens, finds the loved one sitting by
his side,

"So thou, poor, weak, discouraged heart, with wist-
ful waiting sore,
Shalt waken, and thy yearning shall be soothed
for evermore;
For I shall conquer Fortune, heartless, ever-change-
ful witch,
Thy hopes shall all be granted when thy master
shall be rich!"

But this I've whispered vainly to my heart a thou-
sand times
In fleeting years long perished and in distant alien
climes,
As some fond mother, kissing back the sobs and
childish tears,
With wondrous fairy-stories lulls her little loved
one's fears.

"My castle turrets shall arise above a craggy height,
Around them in the heavens kingly eagles wing
their flight,
With winding rivers, lakes, and fields, and forests far
below,
Their ancient summits blooming in the morning's
crimson glow."

But now my castle crumbles, through its halls the ravens wing,
And around its ruined columns mournful ivy tendrils cling;
I see its haggard turrets gleam like spectres of the night,
I see its ghastly windows blindly stare at morning's light.

"When I have treasures I shall win for thee thy maiden sweet,
And thou, poor heart, discouraged! shalt not wither at her feet;
With wreaths of starry diamonds I shall deck her golden hair,
Her beauty shall surrender, she shall save thee from despair!"

Ah me! my poor heart waited vainly for that happy day,
A richer lover won her, bore the maiden far away;
Another's are the kisses that I loved to think were mine,
Another's fingers fondly in her locks those circlets twine.

"My sword shall conquer empires, and my sceptre awe the earth,
My kingdom grandest, broadest, since the gray creation's birth,

My wisdom rise triumphant o'er the secret of the tomb,
My fame still thunder onward till the judgment dawn of doom."

Alas! mine eyes were lustrous, but their morning splendor dies,
Youth's feet are winged like eagles, and from earth he swiftly flies;
So now I falter feebly with the bleeding, dying day,
My promise still is broken, and my locks are growing gray!

"When I get rich, when I get rich!" Poor heart, believe it not!
I'll keep one promise only: thou shalt share the common lot;
Beside thy dead dreams lying, in some charnel's dusty niche,
At last thou'lt slumber equal to the haughty and the rich.

THE POSTMAN.

Postman, postman, what hast thou for me?
Shall there never end to waiting be?
Postman, postman, hast the letter there
Giving me to rapture or despair?

Bearing letters full of golden light,
Bearing letters full of dreary night,
Bearing letters full of Summer bloom,
Bearing letters full of Winter gloom!

Bearing letters full of hope and cheer,
Bearing letters full of doubt and fear,
Bearing letters like a gathered sheaf,
Grains of rapture, thorns and tares of grief!

Thou dost bring to grasping misers old
Gleaming heaps of silver and of gold,
Thou dost tell the broken merchant's heart
News of loss and ruin on the mart.

In some attic, to a humble door,
Where doth dwell some soul obscure,—
Struggling genius with an unknown name,—
Thou dost bring a poet's regal fame.

In some palace, to a sceptred king,
Thou dost dread and dreary tidings bring,
And he trembles, hearing thee repeat
News of desolation and defeat.

Thou dost all the prisoner's woe dispel,
Bringing news of pardon to his cell,
Thou dost stab a mother's bounding joy,
Bringing farewells from her dying boy.

Postman, postman, here in doubt I rove!
Bring me kisses from the maid I love.
Bid her light the darkness of despair
With a ringlet from her golden hair!

BYRON.

His heart was moulded in the weakness of the
crumbling dust and clay,
Yet mighty as the summit of some giant granite
mountain gray;

His fancy twined the blushing roses round the
crystal cup of mirth,
Then like a fleeting phantom wandered through the
desert's parching dearth;

Within his portals Love was throned in richest Ori-
ental state,
While at his doorway crouched the thistles and the
loathsome weeds of hate;

His spirit knew not Spring-time's songsters, nor her
dewy, waking flowers,
But loved the sad magnificence of Autumn's dying
bowers;

His feet were strangers to the purple morning's
palaces of light,
But haunted vistas where the evening's tearful eyes
grew dim with night.

The world hath grander, purer bards, like Alps
enthroned on spotless snow,
While he, like raging Ætna, flames forever with a
fevered glow;

But round their chilly crowns of ice the timid
blossoms fear to twine,
Whilst 'midst his lavas spring the olive and the
purple-clustered vine.

The world hath poets who from want and thraldom
rose to royal fame,
While he from state descended to assume the bard's
and patriot's name;

They with the spell of old Timotheus raised their
muses to the sky,
While he, like Saint Cecilia, drew his seraph earth-
ward from on high;

His soul, though pierced by despot's dagger and the
envious bigot's thrust,
Shall live when Europe's tongues are silenced and
the lips that spake them dust.

TO DR. J. J. WHEAT.

THERE is a wondrous power in earthly song,
Whose eagle spirit soars to Paradise,
Too free and happy for earth's deeds of wrong,
Too grand and glorious for our clouded skies.
The liquid bird-notes at the dawn of day,
The laughing winds that kiss the budding flowers,
Breathe echoes of an Eden far away,
And sing the beauties of its fadeless bowers.
Our yearning hearts leap forth with them to soar,
And by their airy wings are borne on high;
We break the chains of clay which once we wore,
And feel too happy for a tear or sigh.

But eloquence like thine can sway the mind
More strongly than the trumpet's loftiest peal,
More deeply than the moaning midnight wind,
More sweetly than the witching waves' soft spell.
The organ's grand triumphant harmony
Moves not the soul more than thy swelling voice,
The master-singer's notes that mount on high
Have not more power to make man's heart rejoice.
And like Arion singing to the sea,
Till gathering dolphins shone like rainbow clouds,
Thou spreadest forth thy hand, and soon we see
Sweet dreams and visions rise from tombs and shrouds.

When listening to thee, Fancy breaks her bars,
And follows in thy free, unbounded flight;
She wends her way beyond the farthest stars,
And bathes her pinions in eternal light.
We wander with thee by blue Galilee,
Where every wavelet sings a sacred song;
The vine-clad rocks of Nazareth we see,
Where Jesus, weak and foot-sore, passed along.
We see poor Mary weeping bitter tears,
Which wash forever all her sins away,
And then the woman at the well, who hears
Of that unfailing fount which springs in endless day.

A VISION IN ASHES.

The flames flicker low on the shadowed hearth,
The cricket's quaint carol is faintly ringing;
My heart, like the flames as they leap from earth,
Through vistas in dream-land is swiftly winging.
I think of the hours in the spectral past,
Whose echoes are softly and sadly sighing;
Once more through the scenes of that elf-land vast
I wander 'mid bowers, now dead or dying.

I think of my youth, with its beaming eyes,
Its happy romances forever banished;
I think of my hopes, with their morning skies,
Whose glories have faded, whose flowers have vanished;

I think of my castles, now sunk in decay,
  Uprearing gaunt ruins 'mid dead years dreary;
Of golden-haired joys that are now grown gray;
  Of visions departed and dreams grown weary.

I think of the friends who are friends no more,
  All turning their fancies to newer faces;
While I, left alone with a heart so sore,
  Must wander dejected through stranger places.
I sigh as I think of the true ones dead,
  I fancy their pinions still flit around me;
Of dead golden days,—they are now like lead,—
  Ah, meshes enchanted, ye still surround me!

I sigh for the spring that can ne'er return,
  Whose roses are withered, whose sweet birds scattered;
In vain for the summer now lost I yearn,
  Whose bowers are yellow and green leaves shattered;
I look o'er the earth that is sere and gray,
  Where autumn's chill showers and blasts are flying,
And then through the skies of the fading day,—
  All nature doth hearken and answer sighing!

And such is our life, with its sparkling morn,
  With visions that perish, with idle dreaming,
With hopes that desert us when weary and worn,
  And sunset is faintly and coldly gleaming.

The embers grow pale, lose their youthful fire,
And ashes all sombre fall over their glory.
'Tis thus all my dreams and my hopes expire,
And no one will heed them or hear their story.

A FIRESIDE PHANTOM.

Ah, have pity, lonely spectre, with thy sad, reproachful gaze,
Haunting still my shadowed hearth-stone in the twilight dim and drear;
For, my loved one, we can never call to life our perished days,
And forever separated are the souls once near and dear.

Once we roved the fields together, hand in hand, with thoughtless joy,
When thy lips were sweet with laughter and thine eyes unstained with tears,
Thou a little fair-haired maiden, I a fond and dreaming boy,
Ere we tasted worldly sorrow in these hapless later years.

Oh, how green those leafy woodlands! Oh, how blue those summer skies!
Oh, how soft the thrush's warblings! Oh, how clear the bubbling springs!

Oh, how sweet the vine's dark clusters! Oh, how
rich the rose's dyes!
Earth was strewn with budding garlands, heaven
was white with angel wings!

Then thy dark-blue eyes would charm me with a
wondrous blissful spell,
And thy soft cheeks' lovely dimples bound me
like a chain of flowers;
Then thy ringing laugh would thrill me,—ah, I hear
its echo still!
And thy merry songs were sweeter than the birds'
in woodland bowers.

Hand in hand we wandered ever, viewing many a
wondrous land,
Eastern realms whose sands were golden, diamond
valleys, pearly caves,
Fairy isles and haunted mountains, dream-land's
weird enchanted strand,
Knights and maids in grim old castles, treasures
sunk beneath the waves.

But, alas! those dreams have vanished, all those
days forever fled,
Life no longer is a poem, but a lesson dull and
dry;
Youth, grown sad and gray and faded, in the lap of
age lies dead,
Summer's golden-hearted blossoms sleep where
winter's chill winds sigh.

Cruel want hath spurred me onward, toiling for a
loaf of bread;
Hateful avarice chilled my bosom, struggling for
the gleam of gold.
So, sweet Poesie, I left thee, though my soul to thee
was wed,
Though I loved thee, seraph maiden, more than
mortal tongue hath told.

Like the foolish shepherd Paris, I was doomed to
make a choice,
Whether I should take thy rival or should still
around thee cling.
"Oh, choose me, who love so fondly!" spake thy
gentle, pleading voice.
"I will make of thee a poet who is greater than a
king!

"I shall cling to thee forever, thou shalt be my joy
and pride,
Green and never-fading laurels round thy brow
my hand shall twine;
Though thy path be dark and dismal, I shall ne'er
desert thy side,
Thine shall be my bliss and beauty and thy sor-
rows shall be mine."

"But," thy rival quickly answered, "she will make
thee poor and low,
Press thee down to want and sorrow, doom thy
life to cruel scorn;

But, if thou wilt but desert her, fame and fortune
I'll bestow,
And for earth's enchanting splendors thou shalt
never vainly yearn.

"All her gifts are false and empty, all her promises
are vain,
And her laurel wreaths are only strewn upon her
victim's tomb;
Then, desert her! I will give thee pleasures unal-
loyed with pain,
In the present, not the future, after life hath met
its doom."

Then my treacherous heart disowned thee, and I
grasped thy rival's prize,
Left thee weeping, sad, and lonely, like a poor
forsaken child.
Ah! again I see thee, darling, with thy mournful
tear-stained eyes,
With thy golden locks dishevelled and thy sweet
face wan and wild.

All too late I called upon thee to return unto mine
arms,
For thy loving heart was broken and thy gentle
spirit fled.
Nevermore upon my bosom I shall press thy sweet
young charms,—
All in vain I kissed thy dimples, thou wert cold
and still and dead!

Still thy gentle spirit haunts me, as the pensive twilight falls,
And thy dear blue eyes gaze on me by my shadowed, lonely hearth;
Round my neck thy soft arms gather, and thy kind voice sweetly calls,
So I dread thy shade no longer, stealing back to share my dearth.

TRIUMPHANT LOVE.

To love and be loved! I thrill with my joy,
And fancy is blooming in splendor and glory;
To love and be loved! I dream like a boy
Who wanders through gardens of romance and story.

For love is a gem that lights a dark mine,
An islet of verdure that decks a gray ocean,
A fount in the waste of sweetness divine,
A rainbow allaying the storm's wild emotion.

'Tis love that gives life one chalice of bliss,
And strews the grave's gate-way with garlands of flowers;
Like spring, it awakes the years with a kiss,
And wreathes the earth's thistles with blossoming bowers.

The peasant who's loved is rich as a king,
  The king who is hated is poorest of mortals;
Sweet love to lost souls bright blessings may bring,
  And banished, may darken high heaven's pearl portals.

The soul without love! A bird that ne'er sings,
  A palace deserted to silence and sadness!
The soul without love! A god without wings,
  An Eden whose angels have never known gladness!

To love and be loved! the rest is all dross,
  For riches and power are heartless and sterile;
Earth's gifts dim with rust or mantle with moss,
  And glory is shrouded in funeral apparel!

A throne and a crown are rigid and cold,
  The eye of the serpent gleams forth from each jewel,
While love doth gild huts with riches untold,
  And warm into mercy the hearts of the cruel.

I love and am loved! what more can life give?
  Thy bosom, O darling, as heaven I cherish;
Thy kisses would cause the dead to revive,
  Or lead me, O precious, to wither and perish!

Come go with me, sweet! thy heart I enfold,
  Let passion's wine chalice enchant us forever!
Our romance and love shall never grow cold,
  And we shall be severed, my sweetest one, never!

Through life we shall pass with hand clasped in hand,
And shrouded in cerements, still fondly be clasping,
Together we'll tread sweet Eden's bright strand,
Or wander unsevered where wild fiends are gasping!

1888.

THE OLD COLLEGE DAYS.

(Written for and read before the Seventeenth Biennial Convention of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, Chicago, August 31, 1888.)

THE days that have fled seem brightest and best,
The moments now dead most joyous and bright,
The sweetest on earth were lips we then pressed,
The warmest were hearts now silenced in night.
The locks we caressed were fullest of splendor,
The tones that we heard the softest e'er spoken,
The faces we loved most gentle and tender,
Those flowers most fair whose bowers are broken.

The hearts that now beat may charm and delight,
But those that are still were kindest of all;
Sweet voices may still to pleasure invite,
But not as the tones we cannot recall.
The eyes that still wake our souls to devotion
Are never so bright as those that have vanished,
The lips we still touch may thrill with emotion,
But never like those now silenced and banished.

The old college days were gayest e'er known,
  The old college friends the truest on earth,
The love of those friends the surest e'er won,
  The souls of those friends the fullest of mirth.
The boys we then loved were braver and brighter,
  Their faces the dearest e'er gathered together,
The throb of their hearts was gayer and lighter,—
  Ah me! the whole year was soft summer weather.

But now the fleet years grow gloomy and chill,
  The light of the skies is mantled in clouds,
The voice of our mirth grows saddened, then still,
  The raptures of yore are laid in their shrouds;
The dear college friends are scattered asunder,
  The dear college boys tread scenes full of sorrow,
Alone and in doubt the wide world we wander,
  And lose the bright past in each dark to-morrow.

Still, oft in these days of darkness and doubt,
  When life from its height begins to decline,
Amid the dim shades a star will shine out,
  Sweet birds sing their songs and fair flowers twine.
For out the dead past sweet voices come ringing,
  Perfumes of dead flowers revive and flit hither,
Bright faces we knew like angels come winging,
  When old college friends again meet together!

And now on this night we gather in mirth,
  Like shades of old Danes in Odin's feast-hall,
And talk of old friends, the fullest of worth,
  And talk of old times, the dearest of all.

Like sailors long tossed on billows of ocean,
We'll rest us at last with songs and with stories;
Like soldiers long driven by war's wild commotion,
Reposing, we boast our trophies and glories.

Then, comrades, fill up each goblet with wine,
Till bubbles and beads peep over the brim,
Then lift them on high, like rubies to shine,
Or flaming red stars when twilight grows dim;
Now drink to the days deserted forever,
And drink to the joys that now have departed;
Now drink to the souls that fate cannot sever,
And drink to the dead, so brave and true-hearted.

May life for us all strew dreams full of joy,
And bring every hope to flower and fruit!
May each have the heart and soul of a boy,
Where age's cold craft forever is mute!
May all tread the earth with hand in hand twining,
'Mid meadows bedecked in brightest of blossom,
And passing away, all free from repining,
Recline in one bower in Eden's soft bosom!

THE MOCKING-BIRD.

(From an Indian legend.)

I.

I GAZED at a mock-bird high in a tree,
And this was the song he warbled to me:

II.

Thou wond'rest why, as aloft I soar,
I sing to thee not the same strains o'er,
And marvel much that the notes I pour
By other gay birds were trilled before,
And every sound on the sea or shore
I mimic and mock for evermore.

III.

Far beyond the mystic mountains,
Far beyond the sunset's throne,
Where the crystal western fountains
Bubble through the forests lone,

Lived an Indian tribe now perished,
I their prince in days of old;
Yet a maiden sweet I cherished
In a hostile nation's fold.

But our tribes were foemen ever,
So our love we dared not tell,
And I saw her sweet face never
Till the twilight shadows fell.

Then with stealthy steps I sought her
With a signal sharp and shrill,
Till the foeman chieftain's daughter
Joined me in the woodland still.

I would mock the thrush in flying,
Or the katydid at night,
Hooting owl or panther crying,
So her steps were guided right.

Then we roamed in bliss together,
  Kissing in the friendly gloom,
Till the blooming stars would wither
  And the night sink in her tomb.

But together once they found us,
  And they doomed us both to die;
To the stake they dragged and bound us,
  Where the cruel flames streamed high.

But the great God heard our sighing:
  In the sky a storm upreared;
From the smoke two birds came flying,
  And the lovers disappeared.

Yet we heedless twain had ever
  Gazed but in each other's eyes,
Impious souls, had worshipped never
  Him who rules within the skies.

So he saved us but to doom us
  Through the moons to roam apart,
While despair shall e'er consume us,
  Reigning o'er a breaking heart.

I, a mock-bird, fondly singing,
  Robed in sombre ashen gray,
She, with gorgeous plumage, winging
  In some forest far away.

IV.

My tongue must twitter through all the hours,
Still mocking each sound in woodland bowers,
The wail of winds and the sobs of showers,
The cricket's shrill chirp in fading flowers,
The night-hawk's cry in her pine-tree towers,
The bark of the wolf when midnight lowers.

But, ah! at last, in a dim, sweet year,
When gray with despair and gray with fear
And mocking still at the sounds I hear,
I'll trill the true note that strikes mine ear,
The song that's sung by my long-lost dear,
And then her sweet face shall reappear.

Till then this song o'er the forest wide
I'll sing as I seek my vanished bride:

V.

I am seeking for thee ever through the emerald
woods of May,
I am seeking for thee ever through October's fields
of gray;

I am seeking for thee ever through the June-time's
golden glory,
I am seeking for thee ever through December's twi-
light hoary;

I am seeking for thee ever where the morning buds
are blooming,
I am seeking for thee ever where the vesper shades
are looming;

I am seeking for thee ever through the dazzling
skies of noon,
I am seeking for thee ever 'neath the wan and
wasted moon;

I am striving still to find thee 'neath the green mag-
nolia-trees,
I am striving still to find thee by the misty northern
seas;

I am striving still to find thee in the tropic Indian
islands,
I am striving still to find thee in the chill and track-
less highlands;

I am striving still to find thee 'mid the crimson
cactus-blossoms,
I am striving still to find thee 'mid the white lake-
lilies' bosoms;

I am striving still to find thee in the realm of Aztec
mild,
I am striving still to find thee in the land of Huron
wild.

So I seek thee always faithful, seek thee, sweetest, thus forever,
But I find thee in my roamings banished, vanished darling, never!

VI.

Hear the blackbird, silver-throated, calling me to meet him in the breezy boughs,
Hear the jay, so blithe and buoyant, bidding me to join him in his mad carouse;

Hear the redbird, wild and wilful, teasing me to aid him in some curious quest,
Hear the bluebird, sweet and soothing, bidding me to come and see his happy nest;

Hear, amid pink-blossomed orchards, wooing, cooing of the fond enamoured dove,
And the oriole, her rival, begging me to bless her with my love.

But my heart is ever faithful; never shall another love be known to me;
Though the myriad ages wither, in my visions only one sweet face I see.

VII.

I burn,
I long, I yearn,
Through chilly autumns red,
Where blasted, burning deserts spread,

To see thy gentle, tender, loving face,
And hear once more thy wild, sweet, fawn-like tread of grace!

I've not
Thy love forgot;
Then wilt thou let me pine
Far from thy starry eyes divine?
Return, return! then like a merry boy
I'll sing forever for thee thrilling tunes of joy!

VIII.

Indian wigwams, Indian camp-fires from their ruthless pale-faced foes have vanished,
And the red men, like the red leaves, on a hoary winter blast are banished.

All our sacred groves have fallen, all the trophies of our tribe have perished,
All our legends long forgotten, and our mother-tongue no longer cherished.

But amid the desolation, ever vainly for thy presence pining,
Never in my tearful visions have I seen thy glorious plumage shining.

Yet another love can never make me drink from out his bubbling chalice,
And no other maiden woo me to abide within her blissful palace.

I shall love thee till the spring-time thrilleth not the
earth's breast with emotion,
I shall love thee till the dew-drops all have vanished
from the desert ocean.

Though I find thee, beauteous being, not till all the
mountains burst asunder,
And the judgment trumpet rouses all the earth's
dead like a peal of thunder.

"YE BACHELOR."

Old friend, you ask me why, on this November
night,
When every home is filled with life and joy and
light,
I sit here lonely in my silent, shadowed room,
Beside this dying fire, and in this gathering gloom?

'Tis true, 'tis glorious on this gay Thanksgiving
Night,
To look into those homes, so blissful and so bright;
'Tis sweet to see the beaming eyes, the faces fair;
To hear the pattering feet of little children there.

Yes, true it is, I often wish I were away
From these grim walls, from this dull night, to
scenes more gay;
But as I light my pipe, its smoke-wreaths pinions
take,
And gazing in that smoke a thousand dreams awake.

And so I'm not alone, although you smile at me,
And in this dingy place no friendly face you see;
For in the darkness beckon airy spirit hands,
And wandering with them I am borne to wondrous lands.

And now I see a dell with overhanging bowers,
Bedecked in sunshine and a wealth of summer flowers.
I hear the bubbling brook, I hear the lowing herds,
I hear the singing of a thousand happy birds.

And in those blooming bowers I see a little face,
Upon whose cheek no sin or sorrow shows a trace;
Fresh as a blossom jewelled with the dews of morn,
Pure as a young dove in the leafy branches born!

Her eyes are bluer than the timid pansies there,
Her laughter lighter than the bird-songs in the air;
Her cheeks are softer than the peach-tree's clustering bloom,
Her lips are sweeter than the lilac's frail perfume.

And there we rove in joy, with golden skies above,
With humming bees, and birds that carol lays of love.
Her golden hair has snared me in a maze of bliss;
Earth fades and heaven descends around us as we kiss.

Another vision comes: I see her lying still,
With snowy blossoms in her waxen fingers chill.
Her sweet, pale little face, that never knew a cloud,
Is mantled round with silken foldings of the shroud.

Another vision still: I see a new-made grave,
Above whose clods November's wild winds madly rave,
With snow-flakes falling at the wave of phantom wands,
While leafless branches moan and wring their withered hands.

But all those phantoms vanish now, and so I'm here,—
A dull old bachelor, all wrinkled, gray, and sere;
And that is why I sit and smoke my pipe alone,
Or watch the dying embers on my dim hearth-stone.

For when the curling whiffs of feathery smoke arise
From out their shadowy depths, I see her love-lit eyes;
And when I watch the embers in the ashes there,
I see the gleaming of her wondrous golden hair.

And though for home and wife and children's laugh I yearn,
With her my heart was buried, never to return;
And though on earth I still see many a lovely face,
No angel from the skies could take that lost one's place.

A FLOWER FROM THE GRAVE OF SHELLEY.

LONESOME little faded blossom,
  Nestling in a stranger's hand,
Torn from Shelley's gentle bosom,
  Banished now to this far land!

Born of Shelley's ashes holy,
  Nourished by the heart of Keats,
'Midst the ruins melancholy,
  And the charnels' dim retreats;

Springing 'midst the arches olden,
  And the dust of queens and kings,
'Midst the scenes of legends golden,
  And the haunts of spirit-wings!

All my heart is filled with pity
  As I gaze into thy face,—
From the old eternal city,
  Wandering to this distant place!

But while kings and queens may perish,
  Other kings and queens are born,
And each fading flower we cherish
  Blooms again some April morn.

Tell me, then, how buds still blossom,
  And new monarchs come to reign,
While still cold is Shelley's bosom,
  And his voice ne'er heard again?

THE LITTLE WANDERER.

Tell me, pretty little maiden,
Flitting round my footsteps slow,
Lips with song and laughter laden,
Whence thou comest all aglow?

Bringing dreams of spring-time flowers,
Bringing dreams of sunny skies,
Bringing dreams of summer bowers,
Merry birds and butterflies!

Bringing dreams of vistas vanished,
Bringing dreams of perished years,
Bringing dreams of faces banished,
Youthful scenes now dim with tears!

Art thou not some truant fairy
Like a little mortal drest,
Of some bird with young wings airy
Flutt'ring from thy mother's nest?

Tell me, little angel vision,
How thou cam'st to meet me here;
Hast thou stol'n from fields Elysian,
Wandering, lost on earth, my dear?

No, alas! thou art but mortal,
Come to share our gloom and dearth,—
Newly come from heaven's bright portal,—
Come to cheer our cheerless earth!

Leaving heaven, the angels kissed thee,
And their great, soft eyes grew dim;
Leaving heaven, they surely missed thee,
Wandering through these deserts grim!

And I fear, by envy driven,
Pining for thy swift return,
Soon they'll steal thee back to heaven,
Leaving us in tears to yearn.

But should jealous seraphs spare thee,
Sad, I fear, would be thy lot;
Few would be the joys to cheer thee;
Life is cruel, little tot!

Were I but some wizard olden,
I would deck thy path with flowers
Overarched with heavens golden,
Free from blasts and chilling showers.

Were I king, with wealth and glory,
I would scatter at thy feet
Treasures rare of song and story,
Dreams of poets bright and sweet.

But these gifts are all denied me.
So my only prayer can be
That thou still may'st flit beside me,
I from harm defending thee,

So thy little feet may ever
Find the path from sharp flints free,
While the darts from Sorrow's quiver,
Missing thee, shall wound but me.

"SCORN NOT THE HEART."

Scorn not the heart which may be proffered thee,
For burning love may change to burning hate.
When summer pineth in her queenly state,
The wan, wild autumn in her path shall be,
Blighting her blossoms as her footsteps flee;
When day's white wings fade through her golden gate,
The shadows gather in the gloaming late,
And shroud her splendors in the solemn sea;
When through the tropic forest's noonday warm
The waking blasts invade the gorgeous bowers,
Their glories perish in the furious storm;
While selfish Life holds revel through the hours,
He starts at last to see Death's awful form
Creep, cold and cruel, through the fading flowers

CONFIRMATION.

The children, robed in spotless white, I see
Kneel for a blessing at the bishop's feet,
And, as I gaze upon their faces sweet,
As pure as doves, from stain of sin so free,

Before the priest whose sins unnumbered be,
Whose heart for selfish, sordid aims doth beat,
I marvel why his blessing they entreat,
When he to them should rather bend the knee.

Dear little hearts, my soul adopts your creed;
Dear little feet, your pathway I shall share;
Dear little hands, my wanderings ye shall lead!
Dear little brows, guide with your golden hair;
Dear little lips, my God's forgiveness plead;
Dear little eyes, shine on my soul's despair!

"MARY."

Of all the sweet names that ever were given
To mortals on earth or seraphs in heaven,
No matter if borne by milkmaid or fairy,
The sweetest of all must ever be "Mary."

There's "Helen," the star of romance and story,
Men perished to wreathe her ringlets with glory;
There also is "Ruth," so true and so tender,
Whose meekness and faith make mankind surrender.

And "Mabel" 's a name that ever sounds sweetly,
And charms and enchants a mortal completely,
While "Katie" suggests brown eyes and brown tresses,
Created for love and lover's caresses.

There's "Maud" with a mouth as red as a cherry,
With kisses so sweet, with laughter so merry;
There's "Edith," whose eyes are blue as the fountains,
With ringlets of gold like morn on the mountains.

There's "Blanche" and "Adele," that sound autocratic,
Poor "Sarah" and "Jane" that dwell in an attic,
While "Emma" is dear, all dote upon "Jenny,"
And "Annie" is loved not least among many.

But never a name like "Mary" is spoken
To hearts that are glad or hearts that are broken;
Each other brings joy or brightness or sweetness,
But "Mary" alone has perfect completeness.

The lady high-born who reigns in a castle,
The widow forlorn, the spouse of the vassal,
The captive chained down in dungeon cell dreary,
The diademed queen, may bear the name "Mary."

And "Mary" 's the soul who opes the heart's portals,
A sweetheart, perchance, the dearest of mortals;
A sister, whose soul is dowered with beauty,
Or mother, who lives for love and for duty.

'Twas Mary who first wept tears of contrition,
'Twas she who was blest with God's greatest mission;
She stood by His cross, she saw His tomb riven,
Her name shall be first on earth and in heaven.

SLEEPING AND WAKING.

("Died, April 23, 1892, Alfred DuBose, aged fourteen years.")

WHAT, my boy, still deeply dreaming?
Pallid little hands, unfold!
See the morning sunlight streaming!
Open, dear eyes, bright and bold!

Hear the buzzing bees a-calling
Unto thee to come away!
Hear the breezes, rising, falling,
Whisper, "Alfred, it is day!"

See a golden sunbeam peeping
On thy folded eyelids white,
Telling thee to cease thy sleeping
And behold the morning light!

Hear the little birds a-singing,
"Alfred, Alfred, ope thine eyes!"
Hear them still, through green boughs winging,
"Alfred, Alfred, lad, arise!"

Hark! oh, hark! sweet voices humming,
They are seeking thee, my dear!
See thy little playmates coming,
Gath'ring round thee, sleeping here!

See thy loving playmates weeping
All because thou dost not wake!
Alfred, Alfred, cease thy sleeping
Ere the watchers' hearts shall break!

But thine ears are still unheeding,
Though the morning blossom bright,
Eyes still dim to fond hearts bleeding,
Sleeping in the golden light.

But I dream while homeward roaming,
Thinking of thee, bright and brave,
That the angels in the gloaming
Gather at thy lonesome grave.

Smoothing softly boyish tresses,
Kissing folded eyelids sweet,
Opening numb hands with caresses,
Warming little cold, white feet.

Saying, "Dearest, wake forever!
See the sunny morning sky!
Hear the birds sing, ceasing never,
In the blooming branches high!

"Hear the merry breezes ringing,
Calling thee to romp and play!
See the angel children winging,—
Wake, dear Alfred, it is day!"

"TELL HOW I MAY PRAISE THEE."

TELL how I may praise thee, my darling, my sweet,
Bejewelled in beauty and gliding in grace!
I would I could gather and lay at thy feet
Some garland, my dearest, as fair as thy face.

A rose I would call thee, proud queen of the flowers,
Which blossoms in splendor beneath the June skies;
But swiftly it fadeth in Autumn's chill showers,
While sparkles unfading the light of thine eyes.

A bird I would call thee, whose notes are divine,
Which warbles while winging through days of delight;
But hushed is its singing at evening's decline,
While thou dost enrapture the gloom of the night.

A gem I would call thee, with brightest of beams,
Illuming the grotto's dim twilight and dearth;
But lifeless and chilly and gaudy its gleams,
While softly thy sweetness enchanteth the earth.

A May morn I'd call thee, with softest of skies,
Enwreathing with roses the heavens above;
But tempests soon gather, its glory soon dies,
While beauty unclouded thou wearest, my love!

Enchantress I'd call thee, with spell and with charm,
Who bindeth her victims with fetters of gold;
But she is surrounded by spectres of harm,
While angels around thee pure pinions enfold.

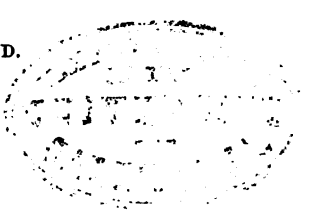
A seraph I'd call thee, descended from heaven
Bedecked in the blossoms of Eden's blest bowers;
But she would despise us, poor immortals unshriven,
While thou dost besprinkle our pathway with flowers.

A star I would call thee, with purest of rays,
Which glitters and guides us o'er heaven's great sea;
But far, far above us and earth's dreary ways,—
Alas, but still like thee! so thou art to me!

"BACK TO THE WORLD."

Back to the world, with all its toils and tears,
My faltering footsteps slowly, sadly turn.
The one for whom my sad soul still would yearn,
Through weary months and dreary, dreary years,
With ever-struggling hosts of hopes and fears,
At last with careless tongue my love doth spurn,
And while I with my cruel anguish burn,
My one sweet dream forever disappears.
Within the crystal goblet's purple gleam
My soul strives to forget her starry eyes;
Within the great world's swiftly-surging stream
My heart heaves to escape her sweet, strong ties;
Yet though 'tis buried, well I know my dream
Will haunt me till my spirit falls and dies.

THE END.



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